

THE SMART SET

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WHEN THE DEVIL RULED

By Marion Polk Angellotti

THERE is a plenitude of strange tales still related in Normandy by those not yet become sufficiently wise to turn their backs on the legends of the past. For example, they will tell you—if you care to listen—about what chanced in the reign of old Duke Richard and his wife, Judith of the Bretons.

These two, it appears, had an only son, called Richard for his father; and when the boy sickened, grew thin and pasty-white, and trembled on death's threshold uncertain whether to retreat or pass on, a panic took them. Was wild Normandy to be left without a ruler? Was the King of France to get his greedy clutches on the realm, so hardly won, so hardly held? They went down on their knees, importuning the saints for another heir, one who should be strong as his Norse forefathers. They walked barefoot to Ouen's shrine, made such splendid offerings as shortly became the talk of Europe. But the saints, deaf-eared, blind-eyed, stood unresponsive in their niches; the boy Richard grew always thinner, whiter; the royal prayers seemed no more than so much wasted breath. And in an evil hour the Duchess Judith, who was a woman of strange fancies, addressed her supplications to the devil.

If you doubt this you will be in-

formed that it is well known how when Rollo, Normandy's first duke, lay dying, he by turns sent gold to Christian altars and offered up captives to his Norse gods; and between such conduct and praying to the devil, is there so wide a difference? The question is plainly unanswerable. Let the tale proceed.

The devil proving kinder than the saints, a son was presently born to the Duchess Judith, and christened Robert amid great rejoicings—but it was whispered that the holy water used at the christening dried on the prelate's fingers before he could do his work. Thus the business began badly, and continued as it had begun. The boy Robert grew in the likeness of his donor, becoming a curse to his parents, the realm and himself; while as for young Richard the sickly, his health mended from the time of his brother's birth, so proving the Duchess's impious prayer to have been made without any need.

How much of this tale is true, let each man decide as he likes, but it is certain that there once reigned in Normandy a duke who succeeded his brother Richard, with strong suspicion of having poisoned him. To us of today, this man is known as father of the great William, England's conqueror; but his courtiers called him Robert the Magnificent, because of the mad splendor of his life;

and to his people, the length and breadth of his realm, he was known for his wild deeds as Duke Robert the Devil.

It is about rulers that strange tales cluster thick. Common folk have to jog along as best they can without such aid, and the people of rock-perched Falaise never thought of accounting by any legend of a devil donor for the black moods of their neighbor Foulbert, who had been born to a tanner's lot instead of a duke's. Indeed, to hold that sort of talk in his presence would have been far from safe. No one ever baited Foulbert, no one ever mocked him, for though his townsmen had scant love for him they had much fear. He was a very dark, sullen man, with a pair of lowering eyes that lightened and gleamed when he was angry, a skin tanned like his own leather hides, and a smell of the tanning vats always clinging about him. While not over-tall, he had wiry limbs, and much work had made iron of his muscles, so that he possessed an extraordinary strength. At all times a peasant's silence was his, and in his worse moods he said not a word for days together.

This sullen humor of Foulbert's is an important thing in our tale. For two-score years it did no more than work the bane of its owner and of some who clashed with him; then, of a sudden, it made history, by sending him where he had no business to be—hunting in the forest of Eraines, which was sacred to the use of his duke. Little enough Foulbert cared for that when the black dog rode his shoulders; to break the law gave him high content. Was a man not made of flesh and blood, then, because he was a tanner? Or were dukes carved out of heavenly stuff, that they should possess even the wood beasts, the wood birds? They would not let poor folk breathe if they could prevent it, would rulers! Ho, Saint Ouen—but poor folk would see about that!

So he went; and our story proper opens in a spot deep in the Eraines forest, all green leaves and gold filters of sunlight, with Foulbert the tanner on his knees beside a stag of twelve points. He was ripping at the dead creature's skin with his knife when there came a

great crashing among the bushes, a horse forced its way through and stumbled snorting to its knees, and out of the saddle half leapt, half fell, with many oaths, a man whom Foulbert knew to be the Sire Herlevin de Conteville, lord of many lands about Falaise and reputed gossip of the Norman duke.

"What have we here, just heaven?" said Sire Herlevin, as soon as he had got back his breath; and then: "Ha, my friend, I know you! You are the tanner of Falaise!"

There was no denying the statement, and Foulbert, murderously angry, recognized as much. A rare turn of fate, this—to be caught red-handed, bending over his prize! Well, it was of a piece with the way the saints always served him. He thought flight was his best chance, and sprang to his feet.

"I would not counsel you," said De Conteville, "to do that, since I have a horse, and four legs go faster than two. I was saying, was I not, that you were the Falaise tanner. Well, you will never tan again—instead, you will hang. Do you find the prospect a pleasant one?"

He broke off as a hunting horn was sounded loudly at a little distance; and Foulbert snarled at him: "Do you think to hang me, my lord? You can do much, but not that. You are no master of these forests—"

"Here comes one who is," said Sire Herlevin.

Again the bushes crashed, and another man thundered into sight. He rode a black horse, and wore a green hunting suit bedizened with gold. For the rest, he had a giant's figure, a mane of blond hair, glittering blue eyes, and an air of crazy splendor that at once alarmed and dazzled. "Ha, Herlevin! What sport, man?" he cried, and rocked out of his saddle to the ground.

"No beasts, no birds, beau sire—only a rogue from Falaise. It appears that your forests are kept for the convenience of tanners," said De Conteville in answer.

The Duke of Normandy looked first at the thief, then at the noble deer beside him. His eyes were hard and piti-

less, like blue jewels. "You will hang, my friend," he said, as Sire Herlevin had said it; but on the last word his face changed. "Saint Ouen! I know who you are! It is you whom my Palaisians think invincible because once you killed a saucy armorer with your bare hands—is it not so? Then I have wanted speech with you for a long time. Come here, Foulbert the tanner!"

He waited for obedience, and Foulbert, who had at first no thought of rendering it, shortly found with surprise that he was standing close before his lord.

"Listen to me, rogue. I am a merciful ruler now and again—and, moreover, I like to fight with those who are strong! The devil put that curse into my blood; it flames there; it will not come out for all the prayers of the monks whom I keep on their knees by day and by night, interceding for me, doing penance. Well, that is no affair of yours. What I would say is that you look a strong man, and have the name of being so. Very good; come try to choke the life out of me as you choked it from that armorer! Succeed, and you go back to your vats; but if you fail you will get hempen coin in payment, since, by heaven, no men shall come hunting in my forests who cannot prove themselves better men than I!"

Normans were well used by now to crazy conduct on the part of their duke. Foulbert knew him by hearsay, Sire Herlevin through long acquaintance, and neither felt any great wonder at his proposal, though De Conteville thought it ill done of a ruler to waste time on such carrion when a single blast of his horn could have summoned the forest guards. To protest would be useless, he knew, therefore he stood back, and a moment later witnessed the beginning of an uncommon wrestling bout, a hand-to-hand struggle between a tanner and a royal duke.

For some time there were no sounds save hard breathing, the rustle of crushed leaves underfoot, loud oaths from Duke Robert and snarling mutters from Foulbert. One might have thought that two wild beasts contended for

mastery. Then the strife was over; the tanner lay on his back and sought for breath with gasping sobs, and the Duke, kneeling over him, put out hands to seize his throat.

"Name of God! So you thought yourself a strong man, knave?" cried Robert the Devil, looking like his namesake. "Having killed some poor rogue of your own condition, you think you can also best your ruler, and come flaunting into his forests to kill deer? Ho, why should I wait for my guards to bring their halters? These two hands of mine are halter enough, if I choose to fasten them about your neck, to twist them a single time—"

Foulbert the sullen was no coward, yet he yielded to panic now. This blond giant with the gleaming eyes was the man about whose lineage Normans whispered at night, bent over the hearth, casting fearful glances across their shoulders. Yes, here was the devil, no doubt of that! He panted out an entreaty, and, since he was true son of his land, the entreaty was a cunning one. "Spare me, lord! Let me go—and I will tell you how the Sire de Cîteaux makes sport of you in Falaise!"

The Duke's hands, already about his throat, loosened their grasp. For a moment Robert knelt motionless; then he shifted his weight a little, so that Foulbert might find breath to speak. "If you are playing with me," he said, "you will regret it, my friend! Now, what is this about the Sire de Cîteaux?"

It was a full minute before the tanner could go on. He gasped, felt at his twisted neck, and finally began to talk in a fashion midway between his old sullenness and his new terror.

"It is like this, lord. You banished the Sire, saying that as all his holdings were hereabouts you could starve him into submission. When he was ready to do you homage and penance in one, by crawling the length of Falaise with a saddle atop of him, he might come back." Foulbert paused to groan and draw breath, for besides being in pain from the treatment he had had at the Duke's hands, he was making the long-

est speech of his life. "Well, the Sire swore openly that he would outwit you, would come monthly into Falaise and get his revenues from his steward, who remained here to look after his lands—"

Foulbert had been mouthing this defiance with a hint of spite, but he paused now, very abruptly. The Duke's face was like that of some Norse god worshipped by his ancestors—fierce, merciless, splendidly a-rage. His hands stirred; he had a sudden look of desiring to kill someone—De Cinteaulx by preference, but, failing him, any man who was near.

"He has done it, my lord," said Foulbert in a hurry. "He enters Falaise in a pilgrim's robe, and meets his steward in my house. He comes tomorrow; you may take him there. I would not grieve to see him hang, I, for he treats me insolently, as all great folk treat my sort—"

The Duke of Normandy got to his feet, leaving the released tanner to writhe to and fro and pant his relief. "I see, Herlevin," he commented to his friend, "that there is nobler game afoot for us than this Master Foulbert. I will hunt De Cinteaulx, and let the tanner go, forgiving him the lesson he merits for aiding my vassals against me. Perhaps, when all is said, he has had lesson enough—I think his neck will be sore for many days, and his back, too. Is it not so, my friend?" He laughed at Foulbert's sullen jerk of the head. "There, sling your deer across your shoulder, and get out of my forest of Eraines for evermore!"

He clambered into his saddle, wound his horn and crashed off through the bushes, a towering figure, all gold and green like the trees about him. Sire Herlevin, who by contrast to his master appeared doubly black, grim and steel-like, lingered to watch with satisfaction how Foulbert staggered up from the ground and began to feel his twisted body. "You will know better than to go hunting in Eraines another time, I think!" Such was the comfort he offered. "And, at that, you have come off easily." Then he, too, spurred out of sight, obeying an impatient blast on the Duke's horn.

Foulbert stood uncertainly on his feet, showed his teeth in a snarl, and shook clenched hands toward the vanished men. Limping, he walked over to where the deer waited with its life blood turning the grass red, and bent down and seized it by the feet to drag it away. He felt torn as if by a rack; movement was a torture to him; yet he was far too dogged to leave his prize behind. "A devil, indeed!" he muttered, as he set off. "May he shortly rule in hell, instead of in Normandy!" The bushes closed after him, and silence settled down on the green solitude of Eraines.

II

In those times Falaise, being the warder of the sea plains and the grim guardian of a large part of Normandy the Lower, was a far stronger place than now; and it was richer, too. Nobles a-plenty went in and out of the *Porte-du-Château* and the *Porte-du-Comte*; there were great houses scattered in the narrow streets, and outside the roads from Caen and Tours and Brittany met, bringing merchants and traders from far away. The town climbed the green slopes of the hill, and above it, on the cliff, towered the royal castle, overlooking on one side the green, misty valley, on the other the cleft through which the Ante flowed. In this castle Robert the Devil lived when he came from Rouen to Falaise—such visits chanced seldom; he had come only two or three times in his life, before his meeting with Foulbert in the woods—and from there he descended next day to the tanner's house, wrapped in a cloak and accompanied by Herlevin de Conteville, who thought poorly of the excursion and said so.

"If another man than you were in question, beau sire," said he, "I would call it a fool's errand. Why not have your men surround the house, bring out this clever Sire de Cinteaulx and hang him in the city square?"

The Duke, striding on ahead, tossed a laugh back across his shoulder, and replied that Herlevin was too fond of hang-

ing people out of hand. "Such is always your advice, man. Hang him, hang him! You make of it a sort of chanted litany. Now I, too, like to kill my foes, but sometimes I like still better to have sport with them, as yesterday I had sport with the tanner. Who knows, perhaps today will bring better doings yet!"

He had more cause than he guessed to say it. At that very instant Fate, whose weaving had begun in Eraines forest, was bestirring herself in rocky Palaise; and Harlette, Foulbert's daughter—of whose existence the Duke was calmly unaware—stood at the fountain and considered whether she should go down to the valley or return homeward. Fate worked hard and fast; Harlette turned slowly up her destined path. And meanwhile Sire Herlevin was answering his master.

"It may have been sport for you," said he, "but it was assuredly not sport for him. Death would be little worse than that gullet grip of yours. As for the other matter, I cannot say why galls were made if not to hang rogues—But behold Foulbert's house, if you care to enter any such kennel!"

The street was of the narrowest, and the house of a sort to match the street, being wooden, mean and squat, like the buildings that elbowed it. Duke Robert set his hand on the door, entered with De Conteville at his heels and found himself in a dark, low-roofed room. The floor was broken in spots; the light, flickering dimly through a single window, showed that the air was full of blue smoke, and touched the smoldering fire before which hung Foulbert's hard-won deer. But there was nobody in sight.

"Plainly the tanner has discretion," said Robert, peering about with narrowed eyes. "He wants to see neither the Sire de Cinteaux whom he betrays, nor myself whose strength of the hands is not to his fancy; so he takes himself off to his tanning down there in the Val-dante. Hey, Foulbert, you are too shrewd a man for your place! I will send you as counselor to the French king, who has less sense than you, and is forever getting into troubles from which

I must cut him a way out!" He laughed loudly, being in crazy spirits, and then stopped and clapped a hand on his friend's wrist. "Someone comes, De Conteville; do you hear? Is it our quarry?"

The two men stood back in the shadow, eyes on that door behind which Fate was busy. It swung open, pushed by a foot; on the threshold appeared a woman with a water jar balanced on her head. Perceiving the Duke and Sire Herlevin, she stood still and stared at them, and they looked back at her in their turn, finding her a sight well worth the looking on.

To understand fairly the story of Harlette, Foulbert's daughter, one must admit at once that she was no disguised princess, no girl of a spirit above her station. Instead, she was peasant-like as the loose garment that clothed her, leaving her full throat uncovered, showing her bare feet and ankles a-glisten with spilt water; and the beauty which beyond denial she had was the beauty of a peasant woman. She was made well, but very strongly, and her features were strong, too, over-strong almost. She had hair of the shade called russet, bright and heavy. Her eyes were of a curious color, warm golden brown, with glints of red; their lashes were straight, their brows thick. She looked stolid and rather sullen, and was in no hurry about addressing the two men.

"What do you want, lords?" she said at last, coming forward and setting her jar on the floor, and in the act spilling a part of its contents. There was in her voice a quality as of one not fond of speaking; the words came slowly, with a kind of resentfulness.

The Duke jerked his head toward Sire Herlevin, who obeyed the gesture. "Our own affair that, wench," said he in his short, grim fashion, which resembled nothing else so much as a snap of steel.

She looked at him, and also at Robert, to whom from the first she had given the better part of her notice. Then, without any further question, she turned away. Moving slowly, she went about her business in this and that part of the room, turning the deer that hung by the

fire, setting her cooking stuff to rights. The Duke's eyes followed her, very bright, very blue; it seemed that for the moment he had forgotten his plans for the entertainment of the Sire de Cin-teaulx. And presently he spoke.

"You waste few words, eh? I had heard that women were given to much chattering—a mistake, it appears. Also, by the Virgin, I had understood that they were a prying, curious gentry! Is it not so, then, and do you care nothing about the meaning of our presence?"

She paused in her work, regarding him from under downdrawn brows. Again her words came as if drawn up difficultly from a far depth. "Can I make you speak if you have a mind to be still? Or if you choose to tear down my father's roof, can I help it? You will do what you want, as is the way of great folk. For me, I will save my breath, and watch what comes."

It was plain that the Duke found her to his fancy, both for her good looks and for the amusement her short speech gave him. He leaned against the table, watching her. "Well," said he, "since obviously you are not one to go crying a secret through the streets, I will trust you with ours. We are duke's men; we are here on the business of Norman Robert. Have you ever seen him, that sovereign?"

Harlette nodded a slow head. "I have seen the Devil once, but not out of armor. He rode up toward the castle, on a black horse. He was of your height, I think—broad, towering." There was no suspicion in the statement; Harlette the peasant was not quick of wit.

"Well," said the Duke again, pulsing with hidden laughter, "if you have not had speech with him, you have heard talk of him, I suppose? You know the tales of how the devil fathered him, how the Norse pirates gave him their blood for heritage, so making him feared and hated of all good Christians?"

Harlette answered with stolid scorn: "I have heard those tales. They are great foolery." She paused, and seemed to reflect, slowly but shrewdly. "He should wed," she ended. "He would do better then."

By this time Sire Herlevin was grimacing at her in the effort to hint that she was walking a perilous path; but as she never glanced his way, she saw nothing—nor was she likely to have guessed his meaning if she had. As for the Duke, he was hugely diverted. "Wed—wed?" he cried. "The Norman devil? Mother of God—and where could he get a wife? Heigh, the tales of his mad fits are known all over Europe; no princess would dare mate with him, for her life's sake—"

"It is pity, then," said Foulbert's daughter. "A princess might do worse. They are sometimes easier of humoring than quieter folk, these wild men."

"Eh, so?" said Robert of Normandy, whom every man in his domains feared worse than hellfire. "And how would you use the devil-uke?"

Once more she reflected, setting her teeth in her full lip. Then she said: "All men are alike, I suppose. I would use this duke as I use my father. When he was weary, I would give him food. When he laughed, I would give him to drink. When he raved, I would go about my business. And at all times I would fret him with as few words as might be." She went over to the hearth and turned the smoking deer.

"A shrewd plan, by heaven!" said Duke Robert, still laughing, but with eyes a-gleam. "Yet maybe less clever than it sounds—for this devil does other things than rave, do you not know that? He has dragged men at his horse's hoofs; he has put his hands on the throat of a foe and choked his life out; he has done killing with sharp steel. How if he used you so?"

Stolid, scornful, she shrugged her contempt. "What cause for fretting, if he did? Have we not all to die some day? I would sleep sound enough of nights, even though I knew he planned to kill me by poison, as he killed his brother—"

"Be silent, triple fool!" said the Sire de Conteville in a low, fierce mutter.

The warning went unheard, drowned in a shout from Robert, a mad cry of pain and rage. In a moment the Duke of Normandy was before Harlette, his hands a-twitch, his eyes glaring, his face

whitely terrible. "Ha, you dare? You dare say what never a bishop in my lands dares breathe? Saint Maclou—holy Ouen—but you shall not say it twice! I can kill with my fingers as well as by poison, I!" His hands went up toward her full brown throat.

If the girl had moved, she had been dead on the instant; but she did not move. Her eyes widened a little; her upper lip rose off her teeth, as an animal's might have done; otherwise she stood stolidly, not giving back a step, confronting the Duke in what seemed a half-angry surprise. To such an attitude Robert was not used. When the frenzy took him servants fled, tumbling over each other at the door; courtiers vanished like shadows; churchmen hurried chapelward to pray for his better ease. Harlette's calm struck him like a blow, shocking him, turning his mood. "Saint Maclou! Saint Ouen!" he cried again, but now in a choking voice and in what seemed a passion of fear. His face was twisted with dread instead of rage. He fell away from the girl, reeled backward toward the wall. Then, suddenly, he shuddered down on his knees, and his cloak, catching on the table edge, fell off him, disclosing the splendid gold and green habit of yesterday, the uncut red jewels at the throat, the falling mane of tossed blond hair.

"Dear heaven! Dear saints!" cried the Duke of Normandy, on the floor of the tanner's hut. His voice rose shriekingly, like the voice of a lost soul. "Let God crush me—let Christ fling me to burn in hell! What guilt has there been to equal mine, since Cain sinned? Mary undefiled—what hope is there for such as me?" It was the aftermath of his frenzy, a remorse more horrible than his rage.

Sire Herlevin snarled fiercely at Harlette. "Now, fool, you have set him off! In these moods none can quiet him—it is of as much use to talk to the thunder, the lightning. Well did I know how little good would come of dealing with rogues who should be hanged!"

Foulbert's daughter was standing with one hand on the table, calm as ever, unshaken by a tumult that few men could

have faced without blenching. Her eyes remained always on the Duke's prone form; they were half-angry at first, resentful in a smoldering fashion, as if she reflected on how this man had gulled her into speech; then, as she heard Robert's torn groans, his panting breath, his desperate cries to the saints, it seemed that her anger died. Advancing slowly and without flurry, she put a strong hand on his shoulder.

"To grieve is a fool's act," said Harlette stolidly. "And tears will not bring back the dead."

Again her steadiness appeared to do its work on him. He stopped his groans, lay for a time shaken by shudders, and at last looked up with wild, haunted eyes. "I am a murderer," he said, muttering. "I am accursed among men. God will bring me to ruin, to an end of horror—"

She answered without emotion: "He made you as you are."

The Duke struggled upon his feet, quieter, but panting still. "A murderer am I," he said again, peering before him like one who sees a vision. "My brother comes to me by day, by night. He rides beside me, stands close against my couch. At the hunt I see him flit through the trees; in the streets, at the banquet, always he is there! And men know my guilt. My courtiers whisper it between flatteries; my people mouth it between their cheers—"

"Well, and will words hurt you?" said Foulbert's daughter.

Sire Herlevin was nodding jerkily, growling fierce satisfaction. Here was a wench of sense, one who first turned the edge of Duke Robert's fury and saved her own menaced life, then set to work at easing his wild fancies with her shrewdness, as a cool touch might ease a fevered head. A pity, thought De Conteville, that some prince of Europe had not possessed a daughter of this sort, and given her to the Duke in wedlock! Things would then have gone better in Normandy during late years, fewer mad deeds have been done, fewer men have died by sudden violence!

"Have you got back your wits, beau sire?" said he, masking relief with gruff-

ness. "It is time, for I hear out there a footfall which no doubt heralds De Cinteaulx—and it would be a rare jest for him to find his dread lord, Normandy's terror, cowering on his knees and whimpering like a child who shakes at a goodwife's specter tale!"

There were indeed steps to be heard approaching, slowly, cautiously. The Duke gave ear to them; and at once the look of horror, melting from his blue eyes, was replaced by the gleam that spelt battle frenzy. His hand went up sharply, gesturing for silence. The steps came nearer; the two men stood back in the shadow, tense and ready, and Harlette watched them from the hearth, her brows drawn down, her lip caught between her teeth. In the end the door swung open, and there came into the smoky room a pilgrim in gray weeds.

"Hey, reverend man, welcome to Falaise! What shrine do you visit? What road do you follow?" said the Duke of Normandy, in a low voice that bore some likeness to the meeting of a sword with a sword.

At this salutation the pilgrim appeared not at all gratified. He sprang backward, sharply; but Duke Robert sprang more quickly still, and stood between his quarry and the door, a glittering figure, fair head back-tossed, eyes cold and bright, lips a-curve in a chill smile; and Sire Herlevin, dark and grim, moved also, so that he was close to the newcomer. For a time silence endured. Then Duke Robert began to speak, apparently without relevance.

"I have heard," said he, "that to recall men once seen is a very royal trait. And I now perceive with pleasure that it is a trait which I possess. Herlevin, does it not appear to you that there is about this monkish visitor some strange likeness to our old friend the Sire de Cinteaulx?"

Having said so much he paused, waiting. And in a little time the pilgrim put up a slow hand, thrust his gray hood back on his shoulders, and showed the passion-twisted face of a man who, raging, urged his rage on, lest mounting fear supplant it. "So you have caught me, my lord!" said the Sire de Cinteaulx.

"A pretty trap—a game well played. And what is it your good pleasure to do with me now?"

"Have you not had sufficient trouble with the rogue, beau sire? Hang him, then!" urged De Conteville, after his custom.

The Duke laughed like a man beside himself. "I will have better pastime than that," he cried, and strode to the door and blew a great blast on the gold-chased horn that hung about his neck. At the sound waiting figures sprang up in a fashion that seemed magical; they tumbled out of dark archways, from darker doorways, from around sheltering corners—the narrow street seethed with them, grim men-at-arms from Falaise castle, with the folk of the town trooping curious at their heels. Meanwhile Robert stood towering on the threshold; nor did he stir until a pair of the men had dragged forward and laid at his feet his great hunting saddle, gold-wrought and chased. Then he turned, still laughing, to the Sire de Cinteaulx, who was grinning wryly and reflecting on his own likeness to a hare amid a snarling pack of hounds.

"Ha, De Cinteaulx," said he, "is your memory as good as mine? Do you recall the homage I bade you do me—the penance which you, stubborn rogue, swore not to perform while the sun shone in the heavens? You will be wise to prove more compliant now, by Saint Ouen! Come, will you crawl through Falaise with my saddle atop of you, thus showing that when I demand service you are my beast of burden, no greater thing? Or shall I set you tomorrow to dangle from my highest tower, as De Conteville counsels?"

There was a silence, tense and long—a time of rare delight to all in the packed street—while the Sire de Cinteaulx calculated his chances, and found them unencouraging. Presently he shrugged. "Needs must," he decided, with his wry smile, "when the devil drives." At which half-hearted jest all men laughed, and the Devil of Normandy louder than any other.

De Cinteaulx went down on his knees with that, put his hands also to the

ground, received the heavy saddle on his shoulders and set off on his path of penance. He went with set teeth, and wasted much breath in cursing. It was a long journey through Palaise; his load galled him; there would be many wagging tongues, many doors and windows lined with curious eyes. He reflected that to shake dice with Duke Robert was scarce worth while. As for Robert himself, he swung on a horse brought forward by one of his men, and rode slowly down the street, a little behind the Sire de Cinteaulx. But as he turned the corner he looked back once, toward where Foulbert's daughter stood in her door.

III

It was Friday of the week, the discomfiture of the hardy Sire de Cinteaulx having chanced on a Tuesday. Clouds had been blown up from seaward, and lay piled behind Palaise castle, gray upon white; there was a mist over the lower plains, a nip of autumn in the air; but Harlette gave no heed to these things. She had come down from Palaise, and was now walking toward the woods—not Eraines forest where her father had hunted his deer, but wilder Gouffern in the distance.

As she went she looked straight before her from under low-drawn brows, not taking notice of any she passed. Sometimes she panted, sometimes her hand went up to her heart; this was not from fatigue, but because of her thoughts. She had, indeed, plenty to consider, for she was fresh from a meeting with Duke Robert.

On each of the three days that had passed since De Cinteaulx did reluctant penance, these two had met in the little valley of the Ante. Robert came down from where the castle lowered over the river, and halted at foot of the steep cliff; Harlette followed the custom of the Palaise women, standing with her feet in water to the ankles, washing and drying on the rocks her armful of household gear. The first day Robert had laughed, jested and talked, mostly about the splendid wars he had made in the past,

and the yet more splendid ones with which he planned to divert himself in future. On his second visit, being in a mood that would have terrified everyone of his courtiers save the grim Sire Herlevin, he said hardly anything, but sat staring with dangerous blue eyes, glooming and muttering, while Harlette worked on unmoved. The third day he talked to her of love.

There was little need of speech about the matter; what wanted saying had been said long since by their hearts. From their first meeting each had drawn the other as the magnet draws iron. The Duke, for his part, was taken by the girl's face, and yet more by her stolid peasant calm, so removed from his own crazy royal splendor; even her dumbness pleased him. He, who could master wild Normandy, and had conquered great nobles and made sport of them, and was known for a better man than the French king, his suzerain, was yet helpless before himself. His endurance had its limits; when pushed to them, he knew himself on the verge of madness; but Harlette, he felt, could never be pushed so far. Whatever came to her, she would meet it with that same silence, only knitting her brows a little over the pain. She rested him, strengthened him, would have drawn him even if she had been hard-featured. Instead, she had beauty; and his heart flared into love.

It was a mad love, a hot love. Whether or no the devil had mixed in Robert's affair, it is certain that the old pirates had. His fathers were the great blond Norsemen of the fjords, marauding giants, who came out of the mistlands in dragon ships, and with shouts to Thor and Woden took the world for their use, seizing crowns, lands, the niched saints of convent chapels—whatever thing caught their eyes by color or lure. Had he not Rollo's blood a-pulse in his veins, this Robert? He, too, strode through the world taking what he wanted; he had desired the Norman throne and its three emblems—the sword girt about the middle, the mantle draped across the shoulders, the crown set upon the head—and had possessed himself of them, at price of a life. Now he wanted

Harlette, and his impulse was to take her as a Norse pirate might have taken a foe's daughter.

"Come up to the castle, girl!" It was so he talked to her. "There is nothing in Normandy that is not yours for the asking—lands, titles, gold! I will bestow holdings on you; I will hang you with jewels like the saints in the church! Come up to the castle!"

She looked sullen as she answered. "I do not want gold. I care nothing about lands. What should I do up there in your halls, among great folk who would make a mock of me? My place is in Falaise, in the tanner's hut."

The Duke laughed. "I would more people were of your way of thinking. From dawn till dark men beg of me these things for which you have so little care; and from dark till dawn they lie awake, devising new means to get them from me. Well, then, being so poor, I can only offer love." He must have been duller than he was not to perceive that such an offer was another matter; she breathed hard, and a smoldering light came into her red-brown eyes. "Will you have that, Harlette—will you take it, and give me your love in change? Who knows—Mother of Heaven—it may be that with you beside me I would not, after all, go mad, as my barons swear I must do yet!" He continued to laugh, but there was a flash of terror beneath his mirth. "Farewell, my girl. Tomorrow you shall tell me your mind."

He went back to where his fortress perched over the valley, and behind its strong walls imparted to Sire Herlevin how affairs were going. "If I must," he said, "I will have her by force—to carry her off would be a simple enough thing; but I want her of her own will, and think I will get her so. She loves me, Herlevin, do you hear?"

"She is not the first woman to do that," shrugged De Conteville, who was still out of temper because the Sire de Cinteaulx had not been hanged conformably to his advice. "Are there so many blond giants in the world that women should deny their eyes the pleasure of looking on you, or so many famous soldiers? Moreover, you are known to

be a ruler, which in such affairs is no hindrance! Yet it is a pity. She appears a good wench; you would do well to leave her in peace, and to make yourself a suitable match with a king's daughter."

"If I made such a marriage," said the Duke, "I would shortly have another murder on my soul." He shook like a sick man over the words, but went on laughing resolutely. "Would a princess take joy in my fashion of life—hunting all day long, fighting with men when wolves and bears fail me? And my blood curse, would it be to her taste? When my next mad fit came over me, she would turn pale and shrink, and so seal her doom. The terror of others turns me to a devil indeed, Herlevin. I should have killed *you* long since, save that for some strange reason you have never feared me."

Sire Herlevin smiled sourly. "If you think that, beau sire, you are dull of wit, or else I feign well. Do you recall how once you came at me with a hunting knife? My knees were water that day."

Meanwhile Harlette was walking through Gouffern forest, without a glance to left or to right. The branches drooped heavily about her; their leaves were more gold than green, since autumn was coming fast, and the ground was scattered with a like gold powdering. Harlette's brows were always knitted; she was turning over her fate in a mind not quick by nature.

Eh, dear Virgin, but here was a lover to come into a girl's life! Strange—she could not think of him without panting, without a sense that the world reeled and the solid earth slipped under her feet. Robert the Magnificent, the conqueror of mighty vassals, the lord of cities and castles without number, the French king's kinsman and prop and stay! Robert the Devil, hero of whispered tales which, at their worst, proved him a being invincible! Ah, and Robert the man—gigantic, overpowering, a Norse god, with blue eyes hot on her face and quick voice wooing her with words like saints' music! He loved her, miracle of miracles! And she? Saint Ouen—was there need to ask that? What could any

woman do but love him, from the moment when her gaze met his?

Yet she had misgivings, and they worked gnawingly in her mind, and she faced them stolidly and with her peasant shrewdness. Could any bond between her and her sovereign be of good omen? She, Harlette, in the great castle—what had she to do there? And it would be a sin; God would be angry, and the saints. If she went to the Duke, she pondered with resentment, some ill would surely befall her.

Framed among the trees rose a little hill, in the side of which opened blackly a small and rocky cave. Here was her goal, the dwelling of the old hermit of Gouffern, about whom Falaise folk told as many histories as there are fingers on the hands. A few sure facts stood clear of the mystery which hung over him. He had lived in the cave a half-century, seeming old when first he came; he ate only wood berries and the like, and little of those; he was a very wise man, and aided the needy by answering their questions, though mostly in a fashion that did not please them. It was held doubtful whether or not his knowledge was unholy, but of its usefulness there was no doubt at all. Men said he had left the world through hate of it, and this appeared likely from the scorn with which he spoke of its doings, the half-veiled malice he showed toward those who dwelt in its midst.

At present he was sitting in the mouth of his cave, a bent figure, white-headed and white-bearded, with bare arms and legs emerging from a torn garment of wolfskin. For a time Harlette stood between the tree trunks, regarding him. Habit had sent her to get his counsel; but what could he do for this new gnawing pain at her heart, or what could any man do, or even the distant Virgin? In the end she came slowly forward, paused before the cave, and held out what was the remnant of Foulbert's deer. "I have brought you a gift, old man," she said.

The hermit did not stir, did not look toward her or what she offered; his pale, watery eyes stared on into the forest depths, as if he were alone; but Har-

lette, knowing this to be his custom, felt no discomposure. She set the deermeat beside him, then seated herself on a rock near by.

"Old man," she said, "I have come for counsel."

Again the hermit took no notice of her, and again she knew that he had heard. She leaned on the rocky wall at her back, considering what she had to say; a shaft of sun fell on her hair, reddening it, and red lights glowed and burned in her gold-brown eyes. Presently she began to speak, slowly and stolidly, while the hermit continued to sit hunched together without apparent thought of her or her talk.

"I am Harlette, the tanner's daughter. A duke loves me—Lord Robert, who is called the Devil. He would have me leave my home, go up to live in the castle. Shall I go, or stay? I want to hear your mind."

She stopped, breathing harder. There was silence, during which the hermit stared on, seemingly lost in thought. At last, still without looking at her, he parted his lips and began to speak. His voice was high and quavering, the voice of an old man, of one very far removed from all the joy and pain and passion of a tumultuous world; but in his eyes there was a pale gleam of spite, as if it pleased him that others should know the stress and storm which had once been his.

"You ask me a simple question enough. I will answer it with other questions. Have you got beauty, to be given for a brief toy? Have you eyes to lighten a little while with love's fires, then to weep blind? Have you a heart to drain dry, a soul to fling under a man's feet for his trampling? Such are the gifts a peasant brings to a loving lord!" The glimmer of malice was deepening under his eyelids, though he never turned his look on the girl. "Have you got these things, and do you want to give them? Then go to your Duke."

When the pause had endured for many moments Harlette rose to her feet. Her breath was coming hard and hoarsely; her eyes smoldered like red fires; she drew her strong brows down

and stared from under them at the hermit, while her words fell in their slow, difficult, resentful fashion. "I have got all these things. And I would give them all, without thought, if so my lord could get one minute of content, or even ease from his mad torments. It matters nothing what comes to me, if he has his will. I thank you, old man. You have taught me my mind."

The hermit sat motionless, hunched together, pale gaze on the tree trunks, where the violet shadows of dusk were lengthening. As for Foulbert's daughter, she gave him no more heed, but turned from him and went away through the trees, walking steadily and surely, as she had come.

IV

It was very near nightfall when Harlette reached Palaise. Surging, jostling thoughts had attended her, weighting her feet; but once in sight of the town gates she quickened her pace, recalling the evening meal she had to make ready before her father's coming. As she went she kept her eyes on the grim black mass of the castle that towered over Palaise. Duke Robert lived there—Duke Robert, who loved her! So thinking, she did not notice the spiteful, sidewise, sneering glances she got as she passed, did not hear the hateful laughter or the muttered words.

Tongues had been busy in the town of late hours; and they had, surely, been given choice enough morsels for their rolling. When a royal duke meets three days at the washing stones with a tanner's daughter, would any village keep silence about it? Moreover, Gonor had seen these trysts—Gonor, the buxom yellow-haired wench who was held the peasant beauty of Palaise; and the sight had driven her into a storm of furious malice, with good cause. A year earlier Duke Robert had come to his castle here; he had descended to a people's dance, and had made merry at it, as was sometimes his custom. Harlette had been at home that night, nursing Foulbert through a fit of sick drunkenness, but Gonor had been on the dancing

green, and had done all that woman could do to win notice from her duke. As for him, he had seemed blind to her. And now, looking out of her narrow window, she saw Harlette standing ankle deep in the Ante water, at work on her washing, and Robert the Magnificent beside her, ablaze with gold and gems, wooing like a lovesick peasant! At the sight Gonor's face flamed. She was out of the house in a flash, darting here and there, whispering, starting a rumor that shortly swept Palaise like wildfire.

In all the town there were few people who bore Harlette any love. She had to take the blame of her father's evil moods and deeds; though it was said she lived no happy life with him, yet she had never been known to make complaint or seek pity—instead, she stood doggedly to Foulbert, and turned a sullen front on all who were not his friends. Women hated her for her good looks; she had made foes of her suitors by curt denial. All told, she was no woman to make friends, though a woman perhaps to give fierce, measureless love when her heart awoke, and therefore she stood alone in this hour of her need. What Palaise might have applauded in another, it raged to see in her. Harlette, Foulbert's daughter, to be chosen out by the great Duke, set up over them, let to ride in state through their midst, given leave to carry her beautiful sullen head higher than ever? Pay homage to Harlette—cry her hail? Not while the saints reigned! They curled their lips at her and her shameful bargain. She dared come walking serenely through the streets, eh? It was at home she should be, hiding her face from decent gentry!

As for Harlette herself, she had other things than her townfolk to fill her thoughts, and never dreamed what was in the wind till an old cutler, more soft-hearted than his fellows, slipped out into the street and put a hand on her sleeve. "You take risks, girl!" said he, muttering in her ear. "Some ill drink for you is brewing hereabouts. If you want you can come inside my door, and wait for a better minute!"

Harlette stood still, looking first at the

speaker, then about her. Yes, storm signals were abroad, plain enough to be seen by any who knew Falaise. There were muttering, leering groups on the street corners, curious faces at the windows, fierce hateful eyes everywhere. Even as she looked came what was the torch set to the thatch. From high above, Gonor's yellow head was thrust out, Gonor's spiteful blue gaze flamed down on her rival, Gonor's voice was raised shrilly. "Jesu, gossips, see the Duke's *mie*, walking like anyone! Why does she not ride in a litter, with lights borne before her to show off her proud face? Is he tired of her already, our lord, that he sends her trudging through folk who are only honest, only clean-named?"

On the instant there were cries from all quarters, jeers, evil taunts, while Harlette stood amid the tumult with head thrown back and teeth set in her lip, and about her the look of an animal driven to bay by snapping dogs. Perhaps in her need she thought of Duke Robert; at least there rose in her eyes a fierce scorn that was fine to see. She looked about her a single time, then turned her face forward, and walked on her way as if the street were an empty one.

"Ho, pure Virgin! The Duke's *mie* holds us not worth a look, not worth a word! She wastes speech only on royal folk nowadays, folk with crowns and scepters!" It was Gonor again, crying from her window.

Down below the tumult grew momentarily. Men cried to Harlette to get them grace from the Duke; women prayed her to beg them dowries, since she herself would need none in her life. Others cried shame on her and menaced her. She went on between their mouthing ranks, stolidly, as if unconscious of them. A stone was flung, struck her cheek, and cut it; she took no notice, seemed unaware. For a little it appeared that Gonor was to get her plain desire, and see her rival thrown down and trampled. Then, slowly but surely, the noise began to lessen. Memories of Robert the Devil, and of certain devil deeds of his, were passing through

more minds than one. He had killed men for less than this—who could say but tomorrow there would be a gallows set up in the Falaise marketplace? A sick reaction began; men fell back with fear quenching their spite, and Harlette, unmoved, passed down a free street and entered her door.

Once in shelter, she stood for a moment in the center of the room, her breath coming quickly, her brows drawn into a frown. Then she went about her work quietly enough, mending the fire, setting the table in readiness against her father's coming. From time to time she put up her hand and touched her cut cheek. Otherwise it appeared that she had forgotten the happenings of the last half-hour, for she looked no more resentful than was her custom.

Night had long since fallen when Foulbert came in, fresh from his tanning, with leathern apron and reddened arms. He shamled heavily across the room, shook a chair by the table with his weight, and sat with propped elbows, scowling blackly. Harlette served him, and he ate. There was nothing to show whether or not he had heard of his daughter's late misadventure, since he often went for days without speech or greeting to her, and the dour look he wore was a habit.

When he had ended his meal Harlette set about clearing the table, and he sat looking moodily before him; only as she put out a hand for his cup did he lean forward and seize both her wrists in an iron clutch. "That cheek wound—where did you get it?" he said darkly, breathing fast.

This black passion of his was sufficient to tell Harlette that he knew his answer, but she remained by him with no sign of discomposure. "I got it from our neighbors," she said after a pause, and speaking, as always, as if speech were painful.

Fury burned in her father's narrow eyes. "So, you admit that? The Palaisians stone you? And you bear yourself in such a way that men can call you the Devil's *mie*?"

His grip had tightened on her wrists, which already were bruised; but she

made no effort to pull loose. "They have called me so." It was all she said.

He waited for more, and when nothing came it seemed that his rage boiled over. "Well, have you no words in you, or do you think it a proud thing to be named like this? You stand there dumb—maybe you are what they call you!" He shook her to and fro, his grip tightening yet further, so that she set her lips; but her voice was steady enough as she answered.

"I might be if I would. It is the Duke's will."

Foulbert got to his feet, still holding her. Apart from Harlette's beauty, there was great likeness in their sullen, resentful faces; and the tanner spoke in a fashion much like his daughter's—slow, difficult, hard. "His will, eh? Who gave him leave to have a will with you? Ha, the Norman devil! One day his fingers go fiddling with my gullet, the next they stroke your cheek! And do you think any good will come of dealings between you and this lord? Do you want to roll in the dust, to have all the town laugh when he turns you off?"

The red lights glowed in Harlette's eyes. She said again: "It is the Duke's will."

"Eh, saints!" said Foulbert deep in his throat, his hand moving out toward the knife on the table. "Maybe I had best kill you, and make an end!"

At this threat she did not waver any more than she had done three days earlier at the Duke's attack. "Kill, then," she answered, shrugging.

Foulbert flung her back against the wall. "Aye, go to your Devil, if you choose—let him befool you for a week, then leave you forever! Make yourself the scorn of Palaise! But mark me, if you see him once again you have no more place in this house of mine! I am a plain tanner; I have no dealing with such great folk as the true-loves of dukes! You understand?"

She nodded shortly and without comment, straightening her torn dress, but giving her bruised wrists no glance. Foulbert resumed his place at the table and sat there glooming, and Harlette,

having covered up the coals on the hearth, went across the room and flung herself on her pallet bed.

V

WHEN Duke Robert the Devil learned what had passed in the streets of Palaise, there came upon him such a fury as made all his courtiers get as far from him as might be, and caused even the grim Herlevin de Conteville to feel uneasy lest some shred of this royal rage touch his garments and annihilate him. Trying to placate his lord by feigning rage on his own account, he suggested that several of the Palaisians be hanged out of hand—a bit of counsel which Robert scorned as insufferably gentle, laughably merciful. Nothing would do but that Palaise be wiped out utterly, with sword and fire, and the barren place where it had stood be granted as a holding to Harlette!

By good luck it was midnight when the news reached the castle, brought by a busybody who would better have held his tongue. Duke Robert first talked of a night raid, then agreed to wait till morning for his vengeance; and sunrise brought other counsel. Palaise was too strong a town to be thrown away; the Palaisians were too taxable a swarm of rogues to be lightly rooted out; and Normandy's master, if a dangerous man, was a shrewd man as well, much alive to his own advantage. Soon after the coming of a dank gray dawn Robert was awakening Sire Herlevin and pouring a new scheme into his sleepy ears.

"It is like this, man!" he cried, very exultant. "If I kill these scum, why then, I kill them, and there is an end of the matter—they can suffer no longer, nor feel regret, but are underground and a deal more at peace than I! Is it not better to crucify their souls, by means of the avarice and envy that consume them? I shall lay a tax on their shoulders—oh, a tax for the raising of which they will need to toil both late and early; and they shall know that these heaped coins are given to Harlette, to hire her serving women, to clothe her royally! That will

be a thorn in their flesh, eh, to toil for her, to sweat for her?

"But there is more to follow. She shall have her high triumph over the envious gallows carrion, and no later than tonight; for she shall come up here to me with a guard of nobles about her, as a princess comes to a sovereign, as Gisèle the French king's daughter came to Duke Rollo! A deal of peering and staring there will be on the streets as she passes, I think! Well, what do you say to this?"

It mattered very little what Sire Herlevin said. He had the wit to perceive as much, and contented himself with a grunt and a shrug.

At a little before noon Harlette carried her water jar down to the Ante, as if royal love, hermit's counsel and public outrage had none of them changed her life's tenor; and the jar was no more than filled when Duke Robert came striding up. For some time he said nothing, but only stood looking down on her with the blue blaze of his eyes, so that, as always when he was about, she seemed to feel the earth slip away from under her.

Presently he began: "You have got a cut in the cheek, Harlette. Whence did it come?" This was the same question that Foulbert had asked, but it was put now with a great difference.

She raised her hand absently, touched the cut with it, then let it fall. "It is no matter," she said, impassive. "I would bear worse than that for you."

Here was more than she had yet granted him in words; his eyes glowed deeper as he listened. "Well, and have you taken thought of my love talk? Have you a mind to follow me whom others shun?"

She stood before him as a purchased slave stands before a master. "I have taken thought. I belong to my lord; I will do his will."

Duke Robert drew a deep breath and muttered some sort of thanksgiving to the saints. "That is well. We will know good cheer up yonder, you and I, eh? And when will you give me ease, Harlette? If I send tonight to fetch you, will you come then?"

Once more there was no trace of feeling about her save in her burning eyes. "When my lord wants me, let him send."

Such submission in a creature so strong and sullen was an overpowering thing; half laughing, half fiercely eager, the Duke made as if to test it. "Not many in Normandy would say as much, my girl! What—you will walk by the Norman devil, smoothing his path as he strides to meet his devil-father? You will risk sudden violence, torture, death, all the things that men say I bring on those about me?" He paused, and for assent she jerked her head. At the gesture it seemed that the mirth was smitten off the Duke's lips, that a sob rose in his throat. "Name of high God, but no ill shall come to you for this! Let all others fear me, but you shall never have such cause, my dear."

She answered: "I shall not fear you. Kill me if you wish. When that is your will it shall be mine, too."

They looked at each other for a moment more, then Harlette raised her water jar and set it on her head, and began to mount the path to Falaise, never looking back.

Her die was cast now, her bridge burned behind her. Whatever came, for so long as she lived she was no more than the slave of this royal madman, this splendid, dangerous lover who made a toy of Normandy and used bloody wars for pastime, and whom all feared but her. Ill would come to her, yes, surely. She must give up her father, who loved her in his rough fashion, and whom in her fashion she loved. She must toss away, so she knew vaguely, the hope of paradise. What did this matter, if she could serve the Duke, ease his remorse a little, as once already she had done? Her heart went out to him in a sort of fierce protection. She saw herself keeping watch over him, driving off his madness with her strength. Through the afternoon she sat over a scant fire, watching the coals with narrow eyes as red as they. These hours, she knew, were the end of her old life. It had not been an over-happy one, that was truth; but at least it had been a known thing, a sure thing. Now she

was to go to a world which held promise of fearful new joys, but in which there could never be any safety, any rest.

By and by, as dusk drew near and the nip of the air grew keener, she caught faint sounds in the distance, horses' hoofs, voices, laughter. At once she got to her feet and stood in the center of the floor with her old look of an animal at bay. The tumult grew; the street outside was full of stir and bustle, loud calls, hoofs knocking on the flagstones. Harlette did not move, stood still with her hands clenched at her sides. The door swung slowly open, and on the threshold appeared a figure with the savor of courts about it, silk-clad, begemmed, with a short Norman mantle slung across the shoulders—the great Lord of Val-ès-Dunes, from whose way in the streets Harlette had been warned off a score of times. Behind him, out in the narrow road, she caught glimpses of other nobles well known to her by sight—the Count of Ry, the Sires of Bray and Aubigny, the Lords of Brionze and Moulton and Troarn and Blainville; she saw fine horses with brodered saddlecloths, the gleam of gold, the pomp of jewels and bright cloaks, the flash of steel. Further back, very dimly to be made out, were peering eyes, bright with hate. Already the townsfolk were alive to this strange new event. They had had excitement a-plenty in the last week, with the humbling of the Sire de Cinteaulx and the stoning of Foulbert's daughter; what was to come now?

The Lord of Val-ès-Dunes advanced into the room, took off his feathered cap and swept the rude floor with it. To him and his friends their fetching of a tanner's wench to the royal castle was a great jest; they had laughed over it all the way down; but its cream lay in the doing of its every part soberly, and he waited with a face of deference till the others had packed themselves in the door, bareheaded like himself. "Your escort, dame," he said then to Harlette, with a wave of the hand, "come at bidding of the Duke to convoy you to the castle."

Harlette looked back at him levelly. He was laughing at her in his sleeve,

this lord; and the nobles behind him were mocking her, too, as was natural enough in men so high over her. Why had the Duke sent such gentry? But it did not matter; nothing mattered any more, save the Duke's will.

"Well, dame?" said the Lord of Val-ès-Dunes.

Harlette answered: "I will go to my lord." Their mirth was plain enough to her; what she never guessed was that many a man there envied Duke Robert, and thought her sullen beauty as well worth looking on in peasant as in princess.

She moved across the room and through the doorway, between lines of nobles. In the street, close to the door, a great black horse waited—the horse which all Palaise knew for the Duke's. She was aided into the saddle, and the lords, too, sprang up with much splendid confusion and mingling of bright colors, blending of scarlet and purple and gold. The ride castleward began.

She was not to forget that ride till the day of her death. They went along the narrow ascending streets, up, up the white roadway, with the castle always perching blackly before them, a goal which it seemed they were never to reach. A rain was gathering; clouds were blown about the sky, thick and gray; the air held a chill dampness. Close at hand, every window was packed, every door; no tongue but clacked low taunts and whispered evil things, no eye but looked askance and prophesied. There was spite everywhere—spite, and hate, and envy. The troop wound on in slow splendor. Harlette, in its midst, never looked to right or left; went stolidly, as if she saw nothing; but she saw all. The Duke had called this progress her triumph, and maybe it was so; but it was her penance as well, and she was at men's mercy, as if set in a sheet at a church door. Nevertheless, she felt not so much shame as dull distaste for the pageantry. She had made her choice for all time. So long as she should live, she would do anything that Duke Robert willed.

The town was left behind, seething and buzzing. The castle loomed close at

hand. Now, indeed, Harlette felt her heart pound and her breath come fast, though to the curious eyes that watched she seemed unshaken. "I think there are princesses who might show less calm on the way to our Duke," said the Count of Ry to the Lord of Troarn; and the latter nodded assent. They were very high up, able to see out across the cloud-driven valleys and the great forests. Here were the walls at last; the drawbridge was lowered, the troop rode clattering over. And here was the square courtyard, packed from end to end, with doors and windows crowded, and in the midst of all Duke Robert, standing in the robes he had worn when they crowned him at Rouen, bearing the ducal crown and cloak and sword.

A high blare of trumpets rang out to greet the tanner's daughter; the troop came to a halt; the nobles drew apart, half to the left, half to the right. Then Robert, advancing, lifted Harlette in his arms, and before them all set his lips to hers.

"Welcome to Palaise, heart of mine! Welcome to the house that is yours, as its lord is yours!"

In Harlette's ears his words drowned the trumpet blare. In her eyes his splendid giant's figure shut out the packed throng. She saw, heard, remembered only him. Still holding her in his arms, he lifted her across the castle threshold.

There was high feasting that night in the banquet room. A hundred torches flared on the painted walls; the board showed no plate that was not gold plate, and Duke Robert and Harlette sat side by side at the table's head, he dressed with a sort of barbarous splendor, she in a gemmed robe, with gold bands in her hair. The merrymaking was loud and long, and no man had ever seen Robert in higher spirits, more full of jests and laughter; but Harlette scarcely unclosed her lips, only sat stolid and impassive, and looked at her duke with smoldering eyes. Very late the revels broke up, and then largesse was scattered in the courtyard—gold coins tossed in heaps from every window—as

was done at the mating of a ruler and a ruler's daughter.

VI

WHEN Dame Harlette—as for the most part she was now called—rode into the Duke's castle, the curious had one consoling thought to hug: it would not be for long, this scandal. Fate was not wont to prove overkind to girls of low birth who caught the notice of princes. What was their lot? A little pleasure, a brief time of lovemaking, sweet words, sweet deeds, then shortly coldness and forsaking. Maybe a year of happiness if the saints were generous; and maybe threescore years to follow, of dragging days and bitter bread. Duke Robert was a great lord, free of courts—he would tire soon enough of this tanner's daughter, this Harlette!

They nodded meaningly and pursed their lips, and gave her a year. Then she would come back among them, and be scorned. There would be plentiful punishment for her brief pride, her maddening escort of nobles, her progress that had set them near mad with rage to see her raised so high. She rode up like a queen, did she? Ah, but let her wait! They would repay her when she came back to sit in their midst; they would drive home the fact of her abandonment, with word, with look, never forgetting, though she lived to be a crone of eighty, whining and shaking, toothless, like old Popée yonder who shivered palely in the full glare of the sun!

As for Harlette, had her townsfolk known it, she was no more sanguine than they. When she was thought most scornful, most exultant, she was in fact most humble. She went to Palaise castle with a heart steeled for whatever came. If her royal lover tired of her in a month, a week, a day, good; she lived only for his pleasure; she would go without protest, whenever he desired it.

Eight years had passed, and to no other woman had he given a glance. If triumph over her sneering world were any balm to her, that balm was hers; not any whisper or scorn or taunt could take it away. More and more, as time

progressed, she held the Duke of great Normandy, till all Europe was chattering of this affair between a ruler and his peasant wench. Robert went to Rouen and elsewhere, made wars, subdued vassals, aided the French king—and pounded homeward, galloping hard, to sit with Harlette in his arms. What had begun as a fancy had turned to a strong passion, the one settled thing in his wild life; he who could never have loved a woman of his own rank had found his mate in this shrewd silent girl from the streets of Falaise. And her love, too, had grown, though she would not have thought that possible. More than ever the Duke was sun and moon to her, and earth and heaven; still, when he came to her suddenly, her breath stopped and the world seemed to reel, and pride in his mad splendor made her heart leap. To be in his presence was sufficient happiness, whether she lay in his arms, or served him his wine cup, or stood in the shadow and feasted her eyes on him. To talk to him she never cared; words were always an irksome effort to her. Almost dumb for days at a time, she wanted only to be about him and do him service.

But these hours with her lover were her only joy, and the things which others envied her she found hateful. Pomp, feasts among great lords, the splendor of the rooms where she lived, the fine robes she wore, the jeweled bands she put in her hair—unreal trifles, fretting baubles, all of them! She would have been more at ease barefooted, in her old torn dress, and far happier back in the mean house where her father sat blacker and grimmer than before her going, dreaded by the whole of the village. She cared as little for lands and castles, would have none of them at Robert's urging. As for the Duke's nobles, she never felt otherwise than stolidly wretched in their midst, though she fronted them daily with unflinching calm. Since she never exchanged words, few had a chance to sneer at her; since she never proffered friendship, none could slight her; but they could, and did, leave her in solitude. Had she done as many another would have done in her

place, alternated love with repentance, fears, prayers before the altar, there would have been priests to comfort and exhort, women to weep and offer sympathy. Instead, she was thought hard and scheming, and her shrewdness made her many foes. Duke Robert had come to lean on this peasant girl—an unbelievable thing.

"By Jesu's Cross, Harlette," he would say, "you have sharper eyes than mine! Now tell me what you see in the Lord of Moulton."

To this question, put to her in a crowded hall, she answered after reflection: "I see a jackal who wants to get a share of your meat, but not to risk his skin by helping you hunt it." The shrewd comment was never forgotten, and the Lord of Moulton, as was natural, never forgave its maker.

Another time the Sire de Cinteaulx, he who had done penance with the saddle on his back, was seeking Harlette's good word with the Duke, and tried to please her with overdone flatteries, talk about her power, her greatness, her noble attributes. When at last his speech broke under the sullen scorn of her eyes, she said only: "My lord, I think you are a great liar." These happenings never failed to delight Duke Robert, who swore she had keener wits than any baron of his council.

She paid deep for her snatches of happiness, did Harlette; none the less deeply that she paid with a calm face and an untwisted lip. Never for a moment could she feel secure, or know when she must be turned away from Falaise to see her splendid lord no longer, not to hear again the voice she worshipped. There was, of course, constant talk about marriages for Duke Robert. And Harlette knew that he must wed in the end; did not all lords do that? She would have had no thought of blaming him for it, any more than a slave would blame her master's marriage. So she waited always, in a kind of dumb, fierce torment, thinking that her every happy hour might be the last.

Her first anguish of this sort came a year after she went to Falaise castle, and soon after she had given the Duke a son,

the boy William, who was later to be crowned King of England and known as the Conqueror. Beaudoin, the Flemish Count—who, being cast in a different mold from his forefather and namesake, Beaudoin Bras-de-Per, needed much help in the conflict that was forever seething around him, and had to thank Robert the Devil for giving him back a menaced throne—chose this inauspicious time to propose a match between his sister and the Duke. Robert declined the offer with civility, and in private laughed at it; but there was little mirth in Harlette's sick heart, for she saw plainly that what had been urged once would be urged again.

Perhaps once a year something of the sort occurred. The humbled Count of Champagne, Otho, wanted to buy good terms that way; Canute of England fancied that if he could bind Robert to him by alliance, he might be allowed to do thief's work unchecked, and dispossess young Alfred and the younger Edward, the children of Robert's sister; other rulers, such as those of Anjou, Burgundy and the southerly provinces, wanted such a match because the Duke would be a rich kinsman and a powerful, and above all a peerless ally in war, better to have for one than against. Each of these sovereigns gave Harlette—of whom they all had heard, and about whom they jested—such hours of torment as no man could ever know. But the eight long years, passing, found her still throned at the Duke's side; and now came the final test of her power over him.

Something was in the wind. She saw it plainly, glimpsed it in the whispering of the courtiers and their side glances, the half-hidden excitement, the lessened respect she got when the Duke was not there to note. Plainly it was supposed her day was over, and her foes were rejoicing. But what had chanced? What could it be? She would not ask, but throughout those days of horrible waiting she was like the Duke's shadow, always standing dumbly in the corner of whatever room he frequented, her brows fiercely knitted, her lip fretted by her strong teeth.

In the end it was De Conteville who

gave her enlightenment. These two had come little by little to be friends, as indeed was not strange, since each had something of the hard, grim strain possessed by the other. To Sire Herlevin alone, in the Duke's following, did Harlette commonly show her thoughts, led to it by a frankness on his part that others might have called brutal. "Duke Robert will tire of you yet, wench!" he would say, when some talked-of marriage had blown by for the moment and her empire was safe; and she: "It is likely. I am ready, by day or by night, to go." That was the way people talked down in the narrow streets of Falaise, in the marketplace, about the tanning vats, and it gave no distress to Harlette. The smooth stabs of the courtiers were another matter; they left her without refuge, with no defense save her eternal silence.

This time Sire Herlevin came to her as she sat on a heap of cushions, staring from the window toward where Eraines forest stretched green. The Duke was hunting that day, and as for the moment she could not have him to gaze upon, she made the best of it and looked instead at the place that held him; so lost was she in her fierce contemplation that she did not know of De Conteville's approach until he spoke. "Well, Dame Harlette," he began, "have you your fine robes made into a packet, your gems put together for carrying away? For I suppose you know that when dukes take royal wives, they cannot keep their true-loves of old about them."

Harlette stiffened all over. So, here then, as she had guessed, lay the cause of all those nods, those whispers, those sneering glances! She did not turn her eyes on Sire Herlevin, but kept them fixed, burning and smoldering, on the distant forest. "With whom does my lord wed? And when?"

De Conteville answered rather more brutally than before, perhaps because he pitied her, and because pity was to him a new thing and not a pleasant one.

"When? How should I know that? But I suppose with all haste, lest a match so splendid slip through his fingers. And do you ask with whom? I

tell you only this—there have been at Rouen envoys from the French king, awaiting our Duke; he has bidden them meet him here; they are looked for to-day. It is known that they come to talk about a marriage pact, and that Sire Henry has a young daughter of whom to dispose. A bolt from the blue that, eh? And a fine offer for any man not a king, name of God? Would many refuse it, do you think?"

Steadily if fiercely, she answered: "None would refuse it. I have foreseen it long. Now it will be."

"Well, to wed is a good thing!" said Sire Herlevin. "By marriage a woman gets a ring on her finger, a priest's blessing mumbled over her—matters on which, it appears, great store is set; and a man gets someone to watch his house and his comfort. My thoughts have turned that way of late, but I want no baron's daughter, no match of policy, I! Hearken, Harlette, shall we two mate the night Duke Robert brings home his princess?"

Wretched, impatient, Harlette sat frowning at him. "You make a mock of me. Great lords do not wed my like."

"Nor do dukes commonly love them," said De Conteville, in his grim fashion. "Yet a duke has loved you long, and I will wed you when you choose."

Strangely, she felt no gratitude, but rather anger. "I belong to my lord. I have nothing to give other men. When he casts me off, I go," she said fiercely. Sire Herlevin laughed to hide the sword stab her words gave him, jibed a little more, counseled her to pack up her gear for departure and went away.

The French envoys arrived before sunset, a very brilliant troop in bright armor and gay cloaks and floating plumes, with banners borne before them; and the Duke of Normandy gave them hearing after supper, in the hall. It was a strange audience indeed; the Duke was but just home from the forest, and still clad in his hunting suit; he held a wine cup in one hand, and had Harlette on his knee, with his left arm about her. The envoys, who had looked for a solemn meeting in a council chamber, with graybeards present to

give advice, made some slight demur as to speaking. But the Duke was not often denied the having of what he wanted and in what fashion he chose, and in a short time the spokesman had begun to recite his part.

His speech was a formal one, and tedious. He told of the King his master's high gratitude to his good ally, Duke Robert, who had aided him against unnatural kinsmen and rebel vassals, and given him back a throne ravished from him by these traitors. He had cause to hold Robert dearer than his own brothers, had French Henry; and he wanted a closer bond still. Convenient to the purpose, he had a daughter. She had been sought by kings—but there was one better fitted to her than any king of Europe. Her dowry would be this and that, cities, provinces, so much gold. What was the Duke's mind in the affair?

When the last word had been said, Duke Robert shook his great shoulders and burst out into laughter, wholehearted mirth.

"My friends," said he, "get back to the King of France, for you waste his time sorely hereabouts and can serve him better at other courts. Tell him I remain his very good ally, his brother sovereign. When he chooses he shall have, as before, my right arm to fight for him, my men to keep peace in his vexed land, if need be my heart's blood, shed in his aid! But he will not have the marrying of me; he must give his lady daughter to one of those kings who so desire her." He set down his wine cup and showed Harlette to them with a wave of the hand. "Here is all the wife I want, all I shall ever have. Tell your master there lives but one woman who can dwell unmurdered with Norman Robert—tell him it is ill meddling with devils, and that he would serve the princess very poorly if he gave her such a lord!"

Having thus made them tremble at sound of one of his surnames, he called the other to their minds and proved himself Robert the Magnificent, by having gifts brought out and lavished on them—cloth of gold, Eastern stuffs, great un-

cut jewels. To his brother the King he sent a finer present yet, and the finest of all to the princess of whom he would have none. Then he dismissed them, and they went away, very glad to be quit of their business with this splendid, appalling person. As for Harlette, when she was alone with her lord she said no word of content or gratitude, indeed no word at all, good or bad. She only turned her face down against Duke Robert's sleeve, and knew, with a slow, fierce joy, that she was to serve him for a little time more.

VII

BUT only for a little time; for she was, by now, too well aware of the truth to blink it. There was afoot against her a worse foe than any royal princess, and its name was madness. How she had fought that enemy, how she had contended with it each inch of the way, none could ever guess save herself, and in some scant measure the Sire de Conteville. But she was beaten, beaten; and her foe was stronger than she.

To the world it appeared that Duke Robert grew greater and greater as time went on. So he did, in achievements, for the more the fire of his madness burned in him, the less rest he could take, the less he found ease in anything save the swirl of furious combat. In these moods he flung himself afresh into King Henry's service, sweeping the French realm as bare of royal enemies as a man's ungloved hand is bare; he got in payment Chambord and Pontoise and the whole of French Vexin, and valued them less than the few moments' surcease of remorse which the worst of the fighting had given him. He so bore himself against Count Otho of Champagne as to have that haughty ruler cringing at his foot, crying for peace, purchasing it at an unreasonable price. He frightened Canute of England, made him divide his kingdom with his robbed nephews. His daredevil splendor in warfare became the bane of Europe, and left a mark that can still be seen dimly, as if through mists; and in his own day,

too, men saw him through a mist, a mist of fear, across which he loomed a great gleaming battle figure, incredibly terrible. But it was the fever of his madness that drove him, and he paid for his triumphs later, moaning before the altars, fighting a remorse that no priest could take away.

The shadow of his murdered brother was with him always, in peace or war. Even in his tent, at night, before a battle, Sire Herlevin would hear him muttering in his sleep. "Pity, high heaven! Am I never to have peace—never, never? Did I not repent, even before my crime was done? Did I not send to bid them fling away the poison—was it my deed that the horse fell dead, that the message never reached its goal? Mercy, dear saints! Mercy, gentle Virgin!" When there was no seething battlefield to engage him, his moods were at their worst, and then he hanged men and ravaged lands and burned castles, only because of the fever that burned his blood and denied him rest. His courtiers dreaded him now as they did not dread fire; when he rode down a street the people scurried out of his way like chased mice; in all his domain there was no one who did not fear him, save only the tanner's daughter.

It was with this enemy that Harlette fought her losing fight over the body of the Duke. She had done much. In the early years she had found it a simple thing to quiet his frenzy with her calm, her shrewdness, her possessed silence. Later it was not so easy. Not once nor twice, but many times, he had come near to killing her, and she had faced him sullenly and steadily, without tremor. "Kill me if you wish. It is yours, my life," she said once, at what she believed her last moment. After these attacks came reaction; he would catch her in his arms, cry for her forgiveness, rain kisses on her face. She took the one event as stolidly as the other, but as the months passed she suffered more and more; for she knew that sanity could not endure long in a man tormented like this.

The end came in a strange way, at a scene of merriment. It was a banquet,

and at the same time a funeral feast; for it was held in honor of the final downfall of the Sire de Cinteaulx. This noble, always a thorn in the Duke's flesh, had capped the measure of his iniquities by aiding to escape from Normandy a certain vassal who lay under royal displeasure. When Duke Robert heard the tale, he sat for a time very quiet but with gleaming eyes, and then sent a messenger to bid the Sire de Cinteaulx attend him. The Sire, being a wise man, did no such thing, but went to his distant castle as fast as a pounding horse could carry him, pulled the drawbridge up after him and began to prepare for a siege. Before long he got it, and in a fortnight the castle had fallen to Robert's attack—men said the devil aided in the business, riding invisible at the Duke's side—and De Cinteaulx was in chains. He was brought back to Falaise in that condition, tied to his horse; in the morning he was to be hanged, as De Conteville had advised long ago and now advised again. Meanwhile, Duke Robert and his courtiers feasted, and Harlette was at the board, too.

The Duke was in a gay mood, though feverish, as always of late. He made jests about the recent skirmish and the present emotions of De Cinteaulx, and then wanted to know what had passed at Falaise during his absence. They told him that a peasant had been caught poaching in Eraines wood, and was now lying below in the donjon, waiting for execution on the morrow. The tale struck a chord in Robert's memory; he turned to Harlette where she sat speechless beside him. "If that black father of yours had not gone a-hunting in Eraines," cried he, "I might never have seen you, heart of mine—might never have had you at my side to cheer me on the way my feet must tread, the way to hellfire! For sake of him and what he set in train, I have a mind to pardon this fellow; and moreover I am in a festal mood tonight, and disposed to hang no villain but De Cinteaulx."

His eyes swept about among his nobles. "How do you say, my lords?

Shall we have in the rogue? Shall we get a bit of diversion by first ordering his immediate death, then turning him loose with a piece of gold?"

Nobody at the table had the power of reading the future, or of guessing the frightful end that the play was to have. There was great laughter and crying of assent and pounding of knives on the board; everyone was mirthful but Harlette.

The Duke sent out a command, which was promptly obeyed. In a very short time the hangings at the door were withdrawn, and a pair of guards pushed in a wild, haggard, half-starved fellow who staggered across the floor, stared with blinded eyes at the splendid company and the gold-littered table, and, having got breath, shook the room with the Norman cry for justice. "*Harol! Harol!*" It was a hopeless wail, coming from a man who already guessed his fate.

Duke Robert leaned forward, blue eyes gleaming. "You cry for justice, rogue? You have boldness, truly, since it is justice I mean to deal out to you, and in such a fashion as you will not like! If you had asked for mercy, now—Saint Maclou! Have you never heard what comes to folk who go poaching in my woods?"

The peasant crouched backward, peering at Robert's great towering figure; he was mad with terror, half crazy like his sovereign. "Mercy, lord, mercy! I was a-hungred; I had no bread!" He flung himself on his knees and groveled; but the Duke went on laughing, and gestured to the guards.

"Take out this carrion. Give him the justice he demands with so much clamor—set him to dangle from my highest tower!"

In an instant more the affair would have been at an end, leaving all who sat at the table in a pleasant humor. But unhappily, to the crazed peasant, the prospect of imminent death seemed no jest. Foaming bloodily at the mouth, struggling in the arms of his jailers, he turned on the Duke a convulsed face and snarled at him through bared teeth. "Eh, eh! Kill me then, Devil! Kill

all poor men who put fingers on a scrap of meat to keep flesh on their bones—and eat off gold, go in silk, you who slew a brother, you who mock God!" He shook to and fro in a burst of laughter, high and insane.

There was terrible silence while a man might without haste have counted five. Then the table went over with a great crash, littering the floor with food and wine and gold plate and drinking cups. The Duke of Normandy was on his feet, towering over the peasant, bending back his head with the left hand and clutching in the right a knife caught up from the board. It hung poised, flashed downward, sheathed itself at the base of the man's neck; he fell with a choking death shriek—lay huddled together, like a heap of rags, against the Duke's foot. Once more the brief hush reigned.

"Pretty work for a banquet, beau sire! Maybe you will let them take him away now, if you have had your will of him," said Sire Herlevin, at his lord's side.

Duke Robert had wrenched his knife free, was raising it again. The torches had fallen with the table, and now lay scattered about the floor, glowing, half quenched; their light showed the great figure, the tossed mane, the mad blue eyes that roamed menacingly here, there, about the circle of risen nobles. "Ha!" cried Duke Robert, in a high, terrible voice. "Men talk of me this way? And which of you gave the rogue his hint—aye, which of you? Will you tell me, or shall I kill you all?" It seemed that he was about to fling himself forward.

Harlette got between him and his lords, and gestured toward the door. "Go," she muttered, short of breath, but plainly with unshaken wits. "Go unless you want to die! Let none stay here but me!"

There was need of no second bidding; they struggled for the door in blind horror, fighting for place, trampling the dead man's body. Only Sire Herlevin stood his ground, though the Duke's mad, glaring eyes were full upon him. Harlette saw that he remained. "Pool!

Pool! Will you go?" she said fiercely. And at that he shrugged, and a moment later the arras fell behind him.

Harlette went up to Robert. "Give me the knife, my lord."

The flight of the nobles had turned his rage. "They leave me!" he panted, shaken all over, his lips touched whitely with foam. "They fall off from me! Hey, and what wonder? Do they not know me for a leper, shunned by God, doomed to burn? All know it, even the peasants." His voice sunk to a stealthy whisper; his eyes narrowed and began to peer about him among the shadows; it seemed that he was searching, with terrible furtiveness, for something which lurked there and threatened him. "Yes, they know it. For see you, girl, my brother goes creeping through *Falaise* of nights, in the hours when spirits may walk abroad! And he whispers to my people, telling them of the poison cup I brewed, of his death in torment. And then he leaves them pale-cheeked and smitten with horror. He comes up from the village by the castle road, silently, swiftly, as wind goes. The men-at-arms who watch my doors cannot halt him; he glides between them, steals through hall and chamber, stands by my couch—" Of a sudden his roving, peering eyes fixed themselves on a spot against the hangings. "Why, look yonder! He is here now; I see him in the shadows, there by the arras! He is coming, he is creeping on me—the light shines across his face— O Christ! *Richard!*" His voice rose to a shriek. "My hour is come at last, just God! For a long time I have glimpsed this dimly—now at last I see it plain! To kill others is useless. It is myself I must kill!"

He poised the knife, ready for the blow; and then Harlette sprang on him, her hands fastening on his wrist. He shrieked out again, cursed, cried to her to let him free; but she held fast. "Stand off, or by heaven you die!" he snarled at her; and she snarled back: "I will never stand off. I care nothing whether I die or not." They fought pantingly, all about the room. The mad Duke was the strongest man in Normandy,

but somewhere Harlette got power to stand against him; he tore off her fingers a dozen times, but they clasped again; he flung her from him, and she regained her hold before he could strike. Then his foot slipped in a patch of spilt wine, and he went down at full length, the knife jolting out of his grasp and dropping, all a-glitter, beside a dying torch.

For a long time he lay like one stunned, while Harlette, panting, disordered, stood tense against the wall, and stared at his prone figure with fierce eyes. By and by he stirred a little; she was alert on the instant, but without need. "Harlette," he said in a dull, anguished voice. "Harlette." It was like the cry of a child. She went over to him, crouched down beside him and took his hands. So they remained moment after moment, without speech.

An hour had passed, and Harlette stood alone in the disordered banquet hall. The Duke had got to his feet a few moments since, and stared about him for a time with blinded eyes, and at length had rocked out of the room and down the staircase. Following him at a distance, as a dog follows a dangerous master, she saw him go into the chapel and kneel down on the stone steps before the altar, and knew that he would remain there for many hours, as was his custom after his mad fits. Slowly she came back to the hall, and stood there reflecting, with her lip drawn between her teeth.

Here was the long-deferred end of all things. While the Duke's madness might be held even a little at bay, there had been hope; now there was none. Well enough she recalled how foreign wars had been kindled for his easing, how men to whom he was but a dreaded name had fallen on red battlefields because he must drown remorse; and she blamed him no more for this than she would have blamed the sun for killing mortals with its golden heat. Let him slay vassals to his heart's content, if it brought him ease; let him kill folk like this peasant, so she thought, looking down impassively at the huddled form that lay at her feet, the pool of blood

beside it. Aye, and let him kill her, Harlette—for what was she save his woman—and what was her life worth, save for his pleasure? But now he desired to kill himself. She had thwarted him for the moment; but his impulse would come again, when she was not near.

Her slow, shrewd brain groped in the dark, searching, rejecting. Fiercely she resented her own dullness of wit. To whom could she turn for counsel? Not to the nobles who had fled like scared boys, nor yet to her one friend, Sire Herlevin. Had any ever helped her in her life? Ha, yes! The years seemed to fall away; she saw herself sitting in a cave mouth in the woods of Gouffern, getting advice from an old hermit, who made plain to her the inner secrets of her heart.

Going to the narrow window, she peered out. There had been mists abroad in the afternoon, rain at dusk when the Duke's triumphant cortège rode home; and now, at midnight, a storm was blowing. Crooked lightning flashes came at intervals, showing dense black clouds from which the water fell heavily. Gouffern would be an ill place tonight. By tomorrow the storm might pass—yes, but by tomorrow the Duke's subdued madness might again flare up.

Harlette left the banquet hall, picking her way amid the litter, not glancing at the murdered peasant. In her chamber she found the fire gone out, and her two tirewomen asleep on the floor. Not disturbing them, she took a long dark cloak from a chest beneath the window, muffled herself in it, and shrouded her head in its hood. Then she went below stairs and out of the castle. She was halted at the gates, but pushed her hood back and showed her face, and was allowed to pass. A moment later she was out in the night, walking fast.

VIII

How Harlette made her way through Gouffern can never be known. There was a footpath which she sought out, and to which she held, keeping it by touch of

foot and finger, bending to feel it when in doubt lest she might have strayed to right or left; and sometimes she had forked lightning to guide her. The forest was drenched, a gravelike place; the stripped branches tossed and moaned, and the ground was thick with sodden leaves.

For a half-hour and more she struggled on against the storm, making the best speed she could, breathing heavily for sheer effort. Then, of a sudden, she saw before her in the blackness what seemed a tiny point of light. It wavered, lessened, vanished, a firefly; it showed itself again, appeared to grow and strengthen—and she knew it for the hermit's fire. After that she stumbled through the sodden forest without thought of the path, following the fire point till it grew to a thing of brightness and flame, a beacon that broke the night with red beams. In the end she crossed a wet space of earth, stood at the mouth of the cave and looked within.

The hermit sat between the rocky walls, hunched over the fire, staring before him with pale, lusterless eyes. He seemed no older, no younger than on her eight-years-past visit; one might have supposed that time had forgotten him. Also, despite the lateness of the hour and the wild weather, he followed the custom she remembered—showed no surprise at her arrival, seemed not to know that she was there.

Somewhat dazed by the sudden light and warmth after her journey through the black woods, she came in stiffly and halted close to the fire. Such visits, she recalled, began always with a gift. At present she had about her nothing which she thought as useful as the deer-meat she had offered him before; but she took off her finger a wide band of pale gold, pierced and twisted, with an emerald flickering greenly in its center. "For you, old man," she said, and laid it down beside him.

He ignored it; plainly, like its giver, he thought it an unreal and useless thing, though many a man in Palaise would have done wild deeds for that green stone. Meanwhile Harlette sat

down by the fire and loosened her drenched cloak. The flames touched her bared brown throat and the rich dress under it; danced, too, on the jewels stuck in her heavy russet hair, and made them glow as her narrowed eyes glowed. She looked splendid and sullen, like a slave loaded with battle spoil by some barbarian king.

By and by she said: "I want counsel again. Do you know what has come to me in these years?"

He looked beyond her with indifference. "How should I know it? What have I to do with the world, or with women? I am far from such things, save when they come beating at my doors," he said in the high, thin voice she remembered.

She pushed her wet hair backward. "I went to my Duke. I have served him a long time. I have given him some ease. But now I can help him no more; he goes mad slowly, and I look on. What shall I do, old man?"

She seemed to see that look of pale malice once more in his eyes, but for a little he kept silence, and they both sat staring at the red-gold coals. Then he said:

"Listen, woman. I bade you go to your Duke if you had a heart to drain dry, eyes to weep blind, a soul to be trampled. You went with a high head, as is the way of youth—and now you come breaking my solitude, asking me a question already answered. Your Duke goes mad, and you who eased him once can ease him no more? Fool—is it not plain that your hour is over, that another must take your task? Mark him well—he will be turning to some new thing, as men do, as they have always done. Is it a woman? Put her in his arms. Is it a desire of another sort? Buy it for him at price of your life, your heart, your soul! I say no more."

He huddled over the fire again, and began to mutter under his breath. Harlette got to her feet and stumbled off through the drenched stretches of Gouffern, pondering dully on what he had said, turning it over and over, looking in vain for any way to practise it.

When she entered Palaise castle again

all was quiet; save for the men who kept watch, the place slept. She went into the keep, passed through halls lighted in ghostly fashion with flickering torches and softly approached the chapel. Standing in its doorway, with her mantle hanging about her like a wet shroud and dripping rainwater in pools on the floor, she looked for the Duke.

It was a small place and a dark one, but all a-teem with splendor—rich vestments, painted images, robed saints, gleam of gold and jewels about the shrines. Candles glowed softly, and in their light, on the altar steps, Robert the Devil knelt as he had knelt before Harlette's going, stiffly and with a convulsed and upturned face. For long spaces of time he was still, save for his rapidly moving lips; but at intervals he moaned chokingly or cried out, and bent forward and laid his forehead on the stone.

"Oh, God's Mother! I am on the threshold of madness. Oh, saints of mercy! Will you drive me mad for my sins?" The terrible cry rang through the chapel, like the wail of a lost soul.

Harlette stood staring at him and frowning wretchedly, careless of her dripping garments and the chill cold that held her, aware only of the gnawing pain at her heart. Stubbornly she forced her mind back to the words of the hermit. "He will be turning for ease to some new thing, as men do." Why, it was truth, that; a little time since he had turned to her for strength; now he turned to prayer and the chapel altar!

She stood considering, brows drawn down, mind working with a slow, shrewd steadiness. It may be that love lent her wit, for little by little she unraveled the puzzle. To her religion was a name, a thing of churches, burning candles, colored saints with clasped hands, figures of Christ twisting on the cross; and to think of it made her uneasy, turned her sullen, since she knew that somewhere was a Being who was angry at her for having yielded to her lord. But Robert thought differently. He must have relief, and by these things to which he cried. Where were they? Above, no doubt; but heaven was very distant, and

the Duke's guilt was near and terribly real. Could she find nothing on earth to help him?

Of a sudden a name, heard long ago, sprang searingly through her mind. Jerusalem! Once she had listened while a priest talked of such a city, telling how men went there and prayed on a certain spot where the Lord had agonized; how their sins were lifted off them, and their souls had peace forever! Where the place was she had no clear notion—very far, dim in the distance. What if Duke Robert went to this Jerusalem?

At the thought she made a quick jealous movement, half panther, all peasant; her hands clenched at her sides, her lip came off her teeth. Was she to give up her possession, till now so tigerishly held? Not to lie in her lord's arms, not to serve him his cup, not to touch his hand or even rest her eyes on him—eh, it would be the end of her life; her sun would go out, her world be black! Well, what did that matter? Maybe if she had been his duchess she could have had selfish whims; but she was only his woman, his servant.

For a moment more she stood looking at him, torn by fierce, hot pain, yet fixed in her intent as Fate is fixed. Then she turned away without any backward glance, and began to climb the winding stairs that led to her chamber.

One who grows up as a peasant girl, working from dawn to dusk, afoot in all weathers, has at least the reward of strong health. Many a woman would have died of Harlette's jaunt into Gouffern; but she paid the event no more tribute than a somewhat restless tossing on her couch through what remained of the night, and was up at sunrise as was her custom, quietly awaiting Duke Robert.

She waited for him the whole of the day, sitting almost motionless above stairs, looking out of the window with such eyes of dumb, furious pain as a trapped animal shows. Secretly, she was impatient for her lord's coming, eager to know the worst. But the Duke stayed on hour after hour in his chapel, fighting with the tide of remorse and madness, and no one, not even Sire Her-

levin, dared go near him. Only when night fell and the torches were kindled and the supper laid out did he come to Harlette in her chamber.

He was very feverish still, but quiet, being worn to utter exhaustion. From time to time he yawned deeply, then shivered and started, and leapt half out of his chair in a surge of the old mad terror. He said nothing, and Harlette, too, did not speak, but gave him food and wine, which he consumed with a sort of fierceness. When the meal was ended she set about her work. Still on her knees beside him, as she had knelt to press the wine cup against his lips, she spoke in the calm way one uses when talking of a matter already settled.

"My lord will be going to Jerusalem, before much time has passed?"

The Duke looked at her vaguely. His dulled brain had caught no more than the one word.

"Jerusalem?" he said, repeating.

Still and stolid, she knelt on. "Yes. For my lord has sick fancies; the devil torments him for a sin he did long ago. When men suffer in that way, they go to a holy place; they kneel and talk to God—"

He understood her now; she saw the terror fade out of his haunted eyes, banished by an uncertain gleam of hope. Ha, she was on the right path; she had read him well! It seemed to her that she had a knife sticking in her heart, but she made no movement, only went on speaking with steady slowness.

"My lord will do that, too. He will go to Jerusalem and pray. And his sin will be forgiven, and he will have peace."

The Duke of Normandy struggled up on his feet with a gasping cry; Harlette saw his face flame with wonder, eagerness, unbelieving joy. For a full moment he was dumb, and then the words came from him in a torrent, peltingly, with sharp pauses between—a sob of thanksgiving, the pæan of one long tormented, who at last sees relief in sight.

"Sweet saints, I praise you! See me in the dust before you, mighty God! Eh, for years I have stumbled in the dark, repenting, agonizing—now comes a lightning flash to break my night; now you

end my strife as by a miracle! Yes, I will cast my crown off, fling away my scepter, put on a pilgrim's robe and walk barefoot over the rough stones. I will traverse Europe, going unarmed, passing but one night in any spot. At last I will come to Jerusalem, kneel at the Sepulcher, cry to Christ to give me ease. The sacred blood will heal me; the wounds in the hands, in the feet, will cry aloud in my behalf; crowned Mary will bend down from where she sits in bliss, the saints will receive my prayer—and I shall have peace, and Richard will never again creep behind me, whispering of a world to come, of a soul forever lost! Ah, Lord Christ, Lord Jesu, I thank you now!"

Harlette was panting, drawing her breath in sharp, torn gasps. But she only said: "It will be so."

Duke Robert reeled and stumbled, fell down on one knee, tried vainly to regain his feet. Stupor was creeping about him, as always after his fits of madness and the vigils that followed them; his outcry had been the final crash of the thunder storm, the last leap of the fire before its sinking. Harlette bent over him and lowered him gently on the heap of wolfskins that lay against the wall. "Let my lord sleep," she said, "since all is well now."

He muttered, "Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" and tried to pull himself up; but already his lids were drooping.

"Let my lord go to sleep," she said again, and he did indeed sleep, almost on her last word.

She crouched at his head, hardly breathing. Only her eyes were alive, it seemed; and they, hot and smoldering, were turned on the Duke's breast, where a gold cross hung by a chain. The look they held was a strange thing—half dull anger at this symbol that lured away her lover; half passionate gratitude for the peace it was to bring him. Hour after hour went by, and still she kept her fierce watch. She had torn out her heart and offered it to buy her lord his desire; she seemed to feel the blood ooze from it drop by drop; she suffered a gnawing pain that was like to endure to her life's end. Yet a savage triumph

was hers also, for Robert the Devil was sleeping with no sign of torment on his face; and this rest of his was her work.

IX

WHEN the news ran through Normandy that the great Duke was to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, there was much outcry among both lords and people. Such a journey was dangerous in those days; the man who made it braved fierce heat and fiercer cold, agues and fevers, violent death at the hands of the Saracens who held and oppressed the Sepulcher. If Duke Robert went, it was likely he would not return, and then what would come to the realm? For years now, while the rest of Europe had writhed in war throes and mighty countries had been torn apart, Normandy had lain snug under the hand of its great soldier-lord, its foes beaten off, its marches advancing instead of receding, its ills only such as came on it through the fierce temper of its sovereign. But what if he died somewhere in a far land, and left his subjects with no heir of his to rule over them? In a flurry and on their knees, they begged him to remain.

The only part of this argument to which Duke Robert seemed to give any heed was the mention of his lacking heir. Over that he pondered with narrowed eyes, and at last struck the table a great blow, like a man who solves a question to his pleasure; but at the rest he laughed, as he was always laughing nowadays. Since the night when Harlette had turned his thoughts to Jerusalem, it was plain that a mantle of guilt and remorse had fallen off his shoulders. In mad high spirits he set his face toward the land over the seas; he would go there as soon as he might; in the meantime all things had regained their savor. He loved to hunt, and spent hours in the woods; feasting gave him diversion as formerly it had done; Harlette's face had its ancient power over him. He strode through the castle like a Viking god, splendid, all-conquering, irresistible, as he had been in the

days when Harlette first came to him—those days when madness, though already his housemate, was not yet his daily comrade. As for her, she remained no less impassive than before. If in her savage pain she wondered how any could be light of heart, or if to see him so changed was balm to her, she gave no sign that could be read.

For some time after his subjects had made useless protest about his going, it appeared that Duke Robert was turning something over in his mind. Then one morning he kissed Harlette, summoned a train of lords to attend him, called for young William, Harlette's son and his—a boy now of seven years—and rode away with the child at his side. Of what his destination might be he said nothing, and Harlette, sitting by her window, straining her eyes along the road by which he went, had a month for reflection before she saw him again.

The cortège returned at last, Robert at its head, in higher spirits than when he had gone, if that were possible. Plainly joy and triumph rode him harder than he rode his horse, and when he was out of his saddle and in the hall he caught the silent Harlette off her feet and held her pressed against him, talking fast and eagerly into her ear.

"Do you want a bit of merry news, heart of mine? Do you want to know a wonderful thing, a thing scarce credible? Then hear the tale of what I have been about this past month!

"I went first to Paris, spurring as my foes spur when I follow them; I clattered a-horseback into the King's palace on the island; I stood in front of the throne, and our boy stood with me. Then, when French Henry had kissed my cheek and made compliments, I said:

"'Beau sire, you have been pleased to say many times that I have done you service against certain foes of yours, and that you desired to make me a suitable return. Well, you shall now have your chance. I am going on a pilgrimage, and though I hope to come back shortly and aid you again, and somewhat better than I have done yet, it may be that I am oversanguine and that the Saracens

will get me; and if die I do, I want to leave Normandy an heir of my blood. Here is my son, young William—will you, my suzerain and the Norman overlord, acknowledge him as Duke after me?" I got his consent easily, and then pounded back to Rouen, where at my command all my barons took a like oath. Moreover, I have sent messengers to Brittany, where my kinsman Duke Alain consents to act as regent for the boy if I leave my bones to bleach in Palestine. What have you to say to this, sweet? Your son and mine to rule in Normandy—it is well thought of, eh?"

She met his triumph stolidly, as her custom was, not betraying her thoughts. "I rejoice with my lord, as always." But in secret she knew another fierce pang. Her boy, strong and splendid, a relic of her great lover—he, too, then, was to be taken from her; for certainly she, peasant Harlette, could have no part in him once he was a crowned sovereign. Hey, well, her lord desired it, and there was an end.

The time for departure drew very near; preparations went on busily; hasty plans were made for the future. Duke Robert's heir being over-young for dealing with affairs of state, the duchy was to be ruled by Gilbert Crespon, the great Count of Brionne, who would make report of all he did to the Breton regent; Raoul de Gacé, a noble and a famed soldier, would be the boy's governor, dwelling with him at Falaise. The hill town was a place of tumult—every day saw some new lord arrive to follow the Duke on his pilgrimage; the castle had turned to the likeness of a camp. In the midst of this confusion Harlette one morning encountered Herlevin de Conteville on the staircase, and stopped to address him for the first time in many weeks.

"Sire Herlevin," she said, "do you go with my lord?"

De Conteville had the look of a man in an ill temper. He stood blackly silent before answering. "I stop at Falaise," he said in the end. She stared; and in a moment he broke out at her with sudden, grating fury. "Go

with the Duke, you ask? Aye, and leave you unguarded by any friend? Folk hereabouts hold you dear, is it not so—would never plan mischief against you, once Robert's hand was off them? Saints, woman, have you no wits, that you think yourself safe?" He showed his teeth in a laugh that was like a snarl. "A rare peasant girl are you, a rare tanner's daughter! A duke loves you for eight years; and I, a noble, would give up my war honor, staying here to guard you—"

She broke in on him with hot, angry eyes.

"I—I! Does it matter what comes to me? You would call yourself the Duke's friend, yet not follow him into the strange land to keep between him and danger? Not tend him if he gets a wound? Not watch him if he takes a fever? And you think I have given up all, to have his friends stop here to guard me? What sort of talk is this?"

After a time Sire Herlevin said: "You are a good wench, Harlette." Then he turned and went down the stairs, and it was shortly noised about Falaise that he was to follow the Duke to Palestine.

The eve of the departure, arrived at last, found Robert and Harlette alone for a brief moment at the falling of dark. It was their farewell, for the Duke was now to hold vigil in the castle chapel; after that he would be purified, bound on a holy quest; he must glance aside at no woman, least of all at this one who had set his feet in the path he was treading. His spirits were still very high, and he took leave of her with jesting and caresses, as if he were doing no more than ride into Rouen. "Will you long for me, my girl, while I am across seas? Eh, but a little time will see me back in Falaise, holding you on my knee, drinking out of the cup you put to my lips, telling you strange tales of outland sights. And I shall be a sane man again, a man no longer companioned by the devil, stalked no more by a tormenting ghost. That will be your doing—by Jesu, there lives in the world no woman who is your like!"

She said: "I have tried to serve my lord. I am glad you go to get peace."

"Farewell for a little time, my Harlette. Never forget me while I am gone."
"When I forget my lord, I shall be dead."

He kissed her again and strode away, still laughing, to his vigil. He never knew that she kept it with him, crouching outside the chapel door till the coming of the cold, dark dawn.

When Harlette saw the Duke in a pilgrim's robe of gray, his feet bare, his blond mane covered by a hood, his eyes flashing blue and bright from the gathered folds, a dizziness took her and made the crowded courtyard swim in waves of darkness, and she had need to clutch at the window for support. It seemed that a great gulf had been set between her and her lord, that God and his Church had intervened to part them. She felt suddenly assured that never again would she see him, never again serve him. But after a moment she took her hand off the window ledge and stood as stolidly as ever, watching the cortège depart.

It wound down the steep road, passed slowly through the town. Priests and nobles followed it; there was glint of armor, sheen of mantles and surcoats, pomp of holy gear and swinging censers and chanted songs. Harlette saw only one figure, one that dwarfed all the rest—Duke Robert the Magnificent, looking more splendid now than ever he had done in glittering mail. She never knew that curious, spiteful eyes were on her, did not guess that the grim gaze of Sire Herlevin came back to her from across his shoulder for as long as he could see her window. Her mind held a single thought—to the last moment she must keep the Duke in sight. She continued to stand looking after him till the procession was a mere crawling splotch of color, very far distant.

Duke Robert was on his way to Palestine to buy peace for his soul, and Harlette was alone in Falaise.

X

News traveled slowly in those times, yet traveled with sufficient sureness.

At intervals of weeks, such and such a piece of intelligence about the Duke of Normandy would find its way to Paris, thence to Rouen, thence at last to where Falaise perched on its rocks. Duke Robert had entered Constantinople, to give an instance; and though that city was well used to the sight of sumptuous princes, he had been a ten days' wonder there, both for his own giant's form and blond Frankish splendor, and for the gold which he tossed about him as another man might have flung chaff. Later, it was heard he had passed through Antioch. At the walls he had by chance jostled against a gatekeeper, who, seeing no more in him than a gray-robed pilgrim, had given him a smart blow of the mace. There had been cries among the Norman lords at this outrage, and for a moment it had seemed that the hardy mortal would scatter his limbs to the four winds; but Robert the Devil, who at home was wont to kill men for a rash word, had laughed—laughed heartily and with a good will, in such fashion as brought the raised arms of his followers down to their sides.

"Here is a penance pilgrimage indeed, by God's throne," cried he, "if I am to be buffeted peasant-wise by dogs like these! It is very well; it is very fitting. I hold that good blow more dear than Rouen, my chief city!" So the gatekeeper got a tossed purse of gold in lieu of sudden death.

When news of such a sort was brought to Harlette, she heard it without comment or show of feeling; indeed, her sullen dumbness was rarely broken nowadays. Most of her time she passed in Duke Robert's chamber, sitting among the things that had been his and regarding them with passion, or staring from the window at the road by which he had gone. Whispers from Falaise reached her; it was said there that even if the Duke came home, to her he would never return. Such gossip was balm to her townsfolk, balm above all to yellow-haired Gonor, now grown fat and far from lovely, but no less jealous of the Duke's *mie* than of old. To Harlette it meant nothing what talk was bruited. Of her own will she had put in her heart

a pain that gave her no time for thought of pin pricks.

Time wore on, and presently came a piece of news so startling as to turn the minds of the Palaisians far from Harlette. It was learned that on his way through Lesser Asia there had come on the Duke of Normandy a sharp sickness. Many rumors flew about. Some said he had been poisoned by an infidel, who envied the Christian God so splendid-appearing a servant. Others thought he had eaten a noxious fruit; a few believed he had caught a fever on the journey. One thing alone was sure—despite his suffering he had not halted.

For a month all Normandy waited tensely. Then there came back to his home near Saint-Quentin a Norman baron who, returning himself from a visit to the Sepulcher, had encountered Duke Robert the Devil, borne in a litter by four Saracens, and followed by the rest of his troop in a state of great distress and anxiety for his welfare.

This Sire d'Avranches said that the Duke was certainly a very ill man, yet seemed in crazy good spirits. (These, in fact, had never flagged once since the night when Harlette did her work; easing his soul and searing hers.) A fever and a sickness were on him, but he was fighting them as he had fought foes all his life, and with as great battle joy. He had thrust his head through the litter curtains, and had recognized the Sire d'Avranches on the instant; and, "Ho, my friend," he had cried, "when you walk Norman soil again, tell my people you have seen their Duke on his way to Paradise, borne by four devils!" He had laughed as he uttered the words, said d'Avranches, but not one of his following had laughed with him; their air had been more that of men who desired to weep.

When these tidings had been given her Harlette sat in the castle day after day like a dead woman. She had never wept in her life, nor did she weep now; there were no tears in her. She did not pray either; she knew God would not listen to prayers from her like. She only sat or stood about in the shadows of Robert's chamber, and seemed, from her

burning eyes, to be daring fate to wreak any ill on her Duke.

After another month of this waiting had gone by, her tirowomen came to her at perhaps an hour before dusk with the news that a man in pilgrim's dress, one claiming to bear tidings for her ear, was in the outer chamber. She went into the room, and found there a strong, heavy-limbed man in a gray robe. As she came in he pushed the hood off his face; and she saw that it was Herlevin de Conteville.

Sire Herlevin was sparer than he had been a year ago, had furrowed lines in his brow and cheeks, and looked like one into whose very bones weariness has eaten. He stood for a while looking at Harlette, and made no offer to speak until she came a step forward and addressed him with fierce eyes.

"Where is my lord, Sire Herlevin? What do you here without him? Have you left him in his fever, and come home to live more daintily than on the road? I say, where is he?" She was breathing hard between her words.

"He is where he will not need me again," said Sire Herlevin—"no, nor need you either. Hearken—our troop is inside the Rouen walls; in an hour the news will be running hither and yon, even to Falaise. For me, I spurred ahead that you might know the truth first, as your right is. Harlette, my girl, Duke Robert is dead."

Beneath his eyes Harlette's face seemed to harden, to take on a grim peasant dullness. She made no outcry; there were no tears on her thick straight lashes; only her brows were drawn down, her eyes smoldered, her breast panted. By and by she said, "Tell me the rest." He noted that her hands were clenched, as if to strike.

Briefly and brutally he gave her the whole of the tale. "You will have heard," he ended, "how the sickness took him. Had he stopped his journeying and lain snug for a time, tended by Eastern doctors, he might have got back his strength. But it was his will to proceed—and who could stay him? Can men chain the lightning, bind the thunder?"

"My lord was lord of us all," said Harlette. "What more?"

"He entered Jerusalem," Sire Herlevin went on. "He prayed at the Sepulcher, made splendid offerings, cried to us that at last he had the peace he sought. Then we begged him to rest, to tend his fever. He laughed. 'I am for the road again,' said he, 'and for my Norman marches, and for Falaise high on its rocks.' We set out next morning at sunrise, but each day we must needs go slower, because always his strength was lessening. By that time we knew well enough that there was no hope, but whether he, too, knew it I cannot say, for it seemed that as he grew weaker his spirits rose higher. 'Never fear, comrades,' so he would cry if he saw us looking sour; 'I shall yet live to hold Harlette again on my knee!' And then—"

Harlette said, "Go on." He had paused, because she had panted hoarsely.

"I have no more to give you," said Sire Herlevin. "He died at Nicaea, and lies buried in the basilica of Saint Mary of that city, where we interred him with suitable splendor." He sobbed suddenly and fiercely, deep in his throat. "By Saint Ouen," he snarled, "but I loved him, devil or no!"

For a moment longer Harlette stood staring from the window, down at the Valdante where once Duke Robert had wooed her as she stood ankle deep in running water. Then, sure that De Conteville's tale was ended, she turned slowly and crossed the room, halting only at the door. "A new Duke reigns now, Sire Herlevin. Are you his friend?"

He nodded briefly. "I swore as much to Duke Robert, both at Rouen and by his deathbed."

"I thank you for that," she answered. "Farewell; we shall not meet again."

He looked at her, his head jerking up sharply. "And why not? Where would you go? Are you not the young Duke's mother, and is not your place here beside him?"

She shook her head. "Once I was a man's love, but never a duke's wife. Now I am a child's mother, but I may not be mother of a duke. I have no

place here now my lord does not need my service, and I go."

When De Conteville spoke again it was harshly as ever, and with no lover-like choice of words; yet the eyes that he kept on her were kind eyes. "Well thought of, by heaven! In your stead who but a fool would stop here, getting mockery from envious tongues? Come to my castle, then; let the priest do his work over us! Never fear me, Harlette; I will not vex you—I am little enough at home. I have need of a woman to keep my house—do you come keep it, while I fight about Rouen for young Duke William!"

Again she shook her head. "I will never do that. I will have no man but my lord."

Not being one to show pain, he shrugged his shoulders. "If you will not, why, then, you will not, and there's an end. But I will take heed that no harm touches you, for you are a good wench. We will talk further of this tomorrow, when you have had rest. Until then, farewell, Harlette."

"Farewell, Sire Herlevin."

Harlette had never learned to give her hand to Le kissed. De Conteville was no courtier, to come and take it. They did no more than look at each other for an instant, with eyes that were not unkind; and then Harlette went slowly from the room.

In the next chamber she paused for a brief time near the threshold, looking over at a couch beside the window, where a boy lay asleep. Young as he was, he had about him a look of Duke Robert, a promise of the same strength and splendor, though the set of his hard jaw spoke of a likeness to Harlette. As she stared at him her breath came harder, her lip rose off her teeth in its savage fashion, but she did not approach to touch or caress him. He was Duke now, Duke of great Normandy. She had no part in him any more, and very soon she turned and passed into the further room.

Slowly and deliberately, like one acting of a set purpose, she laid off her rich mantle and jeweled dress, took the gold baubles out of her hair, shook it down

and braided it. Then, going to her chest under the window, she drew forth something. It was the dress of a peasant girl, the mean robe she had worn when she first came to the castle. For a moment she continued to hold it and look down at it. Then she put it on, and stood bare-throated and with bare feet, the Harlette of eight years past.

Before stirring again she turned her eyes once about the chamber, which was full of old possessions of the Duke. An outworn sword of his was there, some hunting gear, a brodered cloak of the short Norman fashion, a wolfskin which had formerly covered his couch. She looked at all these things with the eyes that a dog fastens on the belongings of its master, and then drew her hood over her face and went out of the room, moving steadily and without noise on her bare feet.

It was chill autumn, as it had been on that long-past night of her coming. Dusk was near, and a pale sunset had piled the sky with clouds of gray and gold. Harlette walked down the steep road up which she had come a-horseback, companioned by men in armor and bright silks; the stones cut her feet and made them bleed, but she did not note it. Most people were indoors at this hour, and the few she met did not glance at her twice, since she seemed no more than a peasant woman with her hood drawn close against the night damp.

She reached the village and passed through its narrow streets, walking under the windows from which her townfolk had cried taunts at her as she came home from her speech with the Gouffern hermit. Now she was in the street where her father lived; now she was at his door. She put her hand against it, swung it open and went in.

The place was quite dark save for the remnants of a fire on the hearth. Harlette first laid off her hood, and remained for a moment looking about her; then she crossed to the chimney and mended the fire, working at it till the room was well alight with its flames. After that she went about her business as if she had never been away, finding what food was

to hand, preparing it and setting it on the table, filling a drinking cup. At the moment when all was ready save for the cutting of the bread she heard a heavy step without; the door opened again, and Foulbert entered.

Years of anger, years of helpless rebellion, had set their seal on the tanner's features. He was more dark, more grim, more violent than of old; he walked with head bent, like a man who goes a hated round. When his foot was no more than across the threshold he caught sight of his daughter. He cried out, gutturally, chokingly, and fell back a step, putting up his hand to clutch at the door. Then silence followed, while Harlette, having looked at him once, went on with her work of cutting his bread.

For many minutes the tanner's eyes were busy. They flashed, first, from his daughter to the knife she held; there was danger in that instant. But he made no movement, and presently his gaze went back to her face. After what seemed a very long time he let his clenched hand drop, came forward heavily and without speaking, and sat down by the table and began to eat.

Harlette went about her business once more, serving him, bringing him what he needed. He ate slowly; none could have told what his thoughts were. Only at the last mouthful did he look up suddenly at his daughter and break the silence with a grim, fierce question.

"Your Devil—where is he?"

Harlette paused in her work and replied stolidly: "My lord is dead, very far off. All Palaise will know it soon."

A sudden flash of joy, of contented hatred, lightened in Foulbert's eyes. He waited for a moment, looking at her, gloating. There was a strange likeness between their faces; it was plain that henceforth, her short happiness being ended, Harlette was to be as dull, as hard, as sullen as her father.

"And your boy, where is he now?"

She answered in the same fashion as before. "I have no boy. The new Duke is up at the castle, as is fitting. Tomorrow he goes to Rouen, to meet the Breton duke his uncle, and to be crowned."

On her last word a noise broke out in the distance. It drew swiftly nearer, increased in volume, swelled to uproar. The two within, remaining motionless and with fierce gaze locked, heard the clatter of horses in the streets, the lifted shouts half drowned in wailing. "*Duke Robert is gone! The Duke is dead!*" It was the cry of the messengers from Rouen, speeding on their way with their fearful news.

When the tumult had swept past, Foulbert took his last mouthful, despatched it and got up slowly. "Well, I told you how it would be, eh? I told you how you would have need to crawl back here, if you went to your Devil! He in hell, you in the dust—I have long looked for it, this night!" He got no answer from her, and seemed to expect none. Crossing the room, he unfastened a rude coffer that lay against the wall, took out a heap of coins, counted them, and lastly stored them in his pouch. As he straightened his eyes fell on Harlette's dropped cloak, the one thing not of her old wearing that she had brought from the castle. His lips curled open; he seized the thing fiercely.

"The fiends take it!" he snarled, and flung it on the coals.

Harlette stood by indifferently, watching him. He turned to the wall, tore loose a ragged old mantle that swung there, and held it out. For an instant she looked at it. Then she took it without comment and drew it about her.

"Come," said Foulbert. "Soon we shall be where none know our names or faces."

Still without making answer, she followed him across the room and out of the door, which he drew shut after them. They turned side by side down the darkness of the crowded street. All Falaise was afoot and in tumult over the news from Palestine, but the thoughts of every man and every woman were with their dead ruler, and none took any heed of the two silent figures. They went on steadily, passed out of the Port du Comte, and turned their faces toward the Caen road. Harlette, not slackening her speed, looked back once across her shoulder. The black castle of Falaise, where slept the boy who was to lead the Normans into England and shake the world with echoes of his triumph, loomed against a few faintly tinted clouds that were already dying; the place had lights in every window, seemed aflame. Below, the town, too, was flaring into brightness. The press was thickest about the church doors; there men were making ready to bear torches through the streets before the chanting monks, as was the custom when a Norman ruler died.

"Well? You look behind you?" snarled Foulbert the tanner. "What have you to do with Falaise, now?"

Harlette made him no answer, nor did she look back again. They passed on along the road. The darkness swallowed them up.



"WHAT is an evil genius?"
"The gift of poetry."



WHEN a woman tells you your coat is wrinkled in the back and that she doesn't like your tie, go out and buy the ring.

THE RACK

By George Sterling

IN HELL a voice awoke,
And slowly spoke.

"Not for God's vengeance met,
Not for my torment sweat,
Not for these agonies
Break I our silences:
Behold their pain excelled
By rapture once unheld.

"In Earth's benignest land
We wandered hand in hand.
All beauty and all woe
Were hers awhile to know;
All griefs were given her,
And I sole comforter.
Slowly her love awoke
And like a lily broke;
But ah, to me more dear
The roses of the year,
And I would wander far
Below the crimson star.
Slow as the jasmine grows
I won her from her snows,
Telling with word and deed
My hunger and her need.
Till, all the stream unbarred,
Her blood flowed passionward.
Awhile she recked of shame,
And spoke her Saviour's name;
Awhile her saints did call,
Then promised all.

"That night there could not be
The Bliss for her and me;
But soon her lord must go
Beyond the flooded Po;
And soon, in steel arrayed,
Went forth his cavalcade;
Then turned my Sweet to me
Telling when all could be—
Ah! God of Hate, who heard
Her swiftly spoken word?

THE SMART SET

"Mid unseen flowers abloom
 We came across the gloom,
 But in that garden close
 Was dark, O Death, thy rose;
 And ere mad lips caressed
 Or breast was hurled to breast—
 Ere broke her last appeal,
 I felt his bravos' steel—
 O stealthy hounds that crept
 Where the low fountains wept!

"So fell the eternal night
 Upon our lost delight,
 And where its horror lies
 I think of Paradise;
 Yet not as they that crave
 The coolness of its wave—
 Sweeter than all therein
 The sin we could not sin!
 Yea, though infernal art
 Goad the remorseful heart,
 Till primacies of pain
 Within this bosom reign,
 First of their legion, first,
 Is that unsated thirst!—
 The pang of lips un-kissed,
 The racks of raptures missed!"

Then on that fury fell
 The silences of Hell.



AMENDMENTS TO ROGET

By Miniver Klutch

CAD—A man who doesn't believe everything a woman tells him.

CHIVALRY—Refusing to accommodate a lady who is dying to be kissed.

CHASTITY—The inseparable attribute of statues.

CLERGYMAN—A ticket speculator outside the gates of Heaven.

JUDGE—A man who agrees to listen to balderdash five hours a day in return for immunity from work.

LEADER—Any politician with influence enough to get his old mother a job of charwoman in the City Hall.

MARRIAGE—The last refuge of scoundrels.

QUACK—A physician who has decided to admit it.

RIGHT—A special privilege which we ourselves have cornered.

SOPHISTRY—The device used by people who get the best of us in an argument.

TACT—The course we should have pursued.

COCHON ROYAL AUX TRUFFES

By Guy Bolton

HE leaned toward me, smiling pleasantly.

"Perhaps you do not know," he said, "that I am your wife's husband."

I selected a piece of celery and bit off the end briskly. "Former husband," I said. I make a fetish of imperturbability.

"Former husband," he acquiesced, with an inclination of the head.

I glanced down at the card with which the waiter had preceded my visitant.

"Cuthbert Barling," I said. "Yes, the name is familiar. I have heard Pauline—" I trailed into an ellipsis and snapped my fingers suddenly at the waiter. One has to seize one's moment at the Café des Gourmets. The only thing the waiters do quickly is disappear.

I bagged my shot. The waiter, realizing he was caught, executed a detour in his escape to the kitchen and paused unwillingly, a silver soup tureen poised menacingly above my shirt front.

"Messieurs?"

I returned to my wife's quondam husband.

"You will further share with me some Cochon Royal aux Truffles?" I hospitably appealed.

He shook his sleek head. "I am waiting for my wife," he said; and as my brows questioned his phrase—"My *present* wife," he added.

I dismissed the waiter with a more imperative summons for my tardy snack.

"What a lot we seem to have in common!" I said. "I also at this moment am waiting for my Pauline."

"Yes," he responded almost absently; "this is her Opera night."

I don't know why this particular remark should have ruffled me, but I spoke rather tartly:

"And is this also your *present* wife's Opera night?"

I thought I detected a sigh. He was so well bred that all emotions were stifled at birth. "It is my present wife's spiritistic séance night," he rejoined. "*Autres femmes, autres façons.*"

"I am glad you came over and introduced yourself," I remarked, more genially. "Waiting for Cochon Royal always makes me nervous. I am constantly in dread of their putting too much seasoning in the sauce, and I always welcome a diversion at critical times. But—tell me—how did you happen to know who I was?"

"By this same Cochon Royal aux Truffles. I read that you had concocted the dish—perhaps I should say invented." He seemed sensitive to brow movements. "As I passed you were giving your order. That and a newspaper picture at the time of your wedding."

I glanced at my watch. "The Opera will be over in half an hour, so Pauline will not be here for twenty minutes. I suppose it might embarrass you—meeting her?"

He kneaded his waistcoat more completely into his figure. Then, as though eased by the further assimilation of his clothes, he permitted himself to smile.

"Not in the least. Pauline and I parted the very best of friends."

"Ah, yes, I remember," I said; "she told me you were such good friends it seemed positively immoral for you to live together as man and wife."

His smile grew more expansive without revealing any golden fissure in his superb dental array.

"How like Pauline!" he commented.

I feigned carelessness to cover a sudden curiosity. "Just *why* did you part? I forget for the moment."

"It was by mutual agreement."

"Yes, I know that," I rejoined, as I buried my nose in my hock glass. They keep my favorite '91 hock at the Gourmets as a hostage to my custom.

His gaze questioned that portion of my face which formed an outer circumference to my glass.

"Pauline has told you? I shall not be revealing any secrets?"

I nodded while I engaged my lips with my napkin, thus saving the utterance of a lie.

"Women tell these things so baldly," I said, "with so little artistry. You, my dear sir, are, I can see, a born *raconteur*."

I had chanced on his most available vanity.

"It is an amusing story," he acquiesced.

I smiled expectantly.

"Shall I really tell you?"

"Please!"

He began:

"I was a very young man when I married Pauline. In fact, we were both young—she eighteen, I twenty-three."

"That," said I, "was six years ago."

"That," said he, "was ten years ago."

From an indeterminate fraction, Pauline suddenly became just half my own age.

"We were children," he went on; "romantic, impractical, undevising. And the worst of it was, our relatives were undevising, too. The rich ones, fortified by their wealth, clung tenaciously to existence; the poor ones, negligible in life, left behind them nothing but their vacuity. We struggled. Pauline had a patrimony slenderer than her graceful self. I had a clerkship that scarcely repaid me for the way it bagged my trousers at the knees. And we felt ourselves wasted in any but the very best society. We felt we did scant justice to our youth and looks if we did not wear well cut, fashionable clothes. Manicure, Opera subscriptions, cabs, florist accounts—these, the mere necessities of existence, were scarcely at our command.

"Of course we were always guests and never hosts. I learned a trick of adjusting my tortoise-shell-rimmed *pince-nez* with both hands when any struggle for a restaurant check took place. It suggested a good intention and was most serviceable. At parties we always waited till any of the company who lived fairly near us had called their taxi, then we hurried out ahead of them and stood arguing with the driver as to whether the machine hadn't really come for us. I spent my days planning subterfuges to execute during our nights." He sank his voice as he revealed the lowest depth of his shame. "I even had to feign the possession of moral scruples that prevented my playing bridge for money!"

A scarcely perceptible shudder passed through his frame. He kneaded his waistcoat still further into his waist line until, I am sure, the fabric was contiguous with his epidermis.

"How long we might have continued this belittling existence I do not know. There came an accident—one of those cataclysmic, soul-shaking events that brings one face to face with the great realities of life. It changed us from two frivolous, thoughtless butterflies to sober, earnest man and woman.

"Mrs. de Peyster van Zant was giving a ball. We were asked. It was the first time we had obtained the entrée to her house. Therefore it was an event—I might almost say an epoch. Pauline must, of course, have a new dress—we were frightfully hard up, but she could not go in a dress she had worn before. That is an axiom. We spent the night in asserting it and in debating ways and means. Toward morning I had an idea.

"'Pauline, I have the solution,' I exclaimed, propping myself on one elbow in my excitement. She was just dozing off to sleep from sheer exhaustion, but my triumphant tone aroused her. 'No,' I cried, 'you cannot go in a dress that you have worn before—that is true; but you can go in a dress that someone else has worn.'

"At first she would not hear of it, but finally I persuaded her. We bought a dress at one of those secondhand places

on Sixth Avenue—a dress of most unusual beauty: deep green-blue silk, the bodice entirely overlaid with peacock feathers. Pauline was superstitious about peacock feathers. I laughed at her superstition. Later I came to believe in it myself—profoundly.

"I will not harrow you with the picture of our arrival—the scene at the head of the stairs that was so bewilderingly horrible. That dress was one that Mr. de Peyster van Zant—gay old dog that he is—had ordered for a fair lady who was in the habit of accepting such tokens of his affection. Mrs. van Zant did not know who the woman in question was, but when the modiste by mistake had sent the dress to her, she decided that here was the chance to find out. She returned it and sat down to bide her time. That time came with the appearance of Pauline. We left the house humiliated and disgraced. We were confronted with the dreadful choice of allowing Pauline's reputation to be sullied or of admitting we had bought the dress secondhand!

"We were young and sentimental. It was a hard fought question, but we felt we must preserve our footing in society, even if it cost Pauline her good name.

"Pauline was pestered by offers of valuable presents from those who wished to emulate van Zant's success. Several mid-Victorian old ladies lectured her on having been indiscreet.

"That event woke us up. We saw ourselves for what we were—parasites. 'Pauline,' I said, 'we must recover our lost self-respect. We must get a divorce and each of us employ our endowments to find a partner who can support us in the style we desire and deserve.'

"Pauline wept and clung to me, but she saw the wisdom of my words. 'Some day,' I said, 'perhaps we can be reunited.'

I interrupted him sharply. "What do you mean?" I said.

"I meant then," he said suavely, "that we should each select someone old and fragile; but Pauline evidently could not bring herself to do that."

His politeness somewhat mollified me. "Youth is a comparative term," I observed, perhaps a trifle gruffly.

"We realized that," he responded, "and it was the one thing we possessed. We were wasting our only patrimony. We were doing without the things we needed and longed for during the years we were best qualified to enjoy them.

"These represent some of the arguments in a discussion that lasted for weeks. Women have a positive distaste for action which they term eccentric or bizarre. But finally my common sense prevailed. We scraped together a little money to send Pauline to Reno. The parting was hard at first, but we wrote to each other every day."

"It was on the return journey that she met and fell in love with me," I said.

"Yes," he sighed—he did actually sigh this time. "She met and fell in love with you. My dream of ultimate reunion was shattered by the capricious god."

"And you?" I questioned.

"And I also—though I never ceased to treasure the memory of Pauline—I also fell in love."

"The widow of the Cocoa King?" I said.

"Cobalt, not cocoa," he fastidiously corrected.

"It is the same thing," I answered, with a wave of the hand.

"You see," he remarked, glancing at an adjoining table for inspiration, "life is like bacon—alternate streaks of fat and lean. Either one requires the other to make it truly palatable. Now Pauline and I are as great a mistake in combination as you and my wife would be. We are of the lean streak—you the fat."

I glanced at his receding waistcoat while the two top buttons of my own stared up blandly at my cascading chin. For the first time I really hated him.

He must have guessed my thought, for he hastened to make amends. "There is nothing personal in my metaphor," he said.

The constraint was not, however, to be relieved so easily. He fidgeted a moment, while I thanked him somewhat coldly for his entertaining tale. Then the waiter brought the Cochon Royal aux Truffes. I was so engrossed with

the question of whether or not the sauce was overseasoned that my adieux were perfunctory.

I was feasting contentedly when, a few minutes later, Pauline arrived.

"The Opera was a frightful bore," she said. "Half the grand tier boxes were empty; but that van Zant woman was there in a perfect scream of a dress. We all laughed every time we passed her in the foyer."

I paused with a fork full of Cochon Royal halfway to my mouth. "Do you see that tall, thin man over there?" I said. "The man who looks as if his clothes were put on by a Swedish masseur?"

Pauline raised her lorgnon. "Good gracious!" she exclaimed with a start. "It's Cuthbert! I thought he was living in Paris!"

Cochon Royal always makes me moralistic. "Consider the gilded youth," I said. "They sew not, neither do they spin—"

"How can you talk like that?" Pauline interrupted. "Cuthbert is an inventor."

"What did he invent?" I inquired incredulously.

"He invented a necktie—a new knot. Everybody who is *anybody*—"

"I believe you are still in love with him," I cut in savagely.

"Of course I'm not," she answered. "But I should think you'd be glad to know my former husband's something of a celebrity. It reflects dignity upon you."

A small, fussy, middle-aged woman was disposing herself and her multitudinous wraps on the chair opposite the inventor of the "Barling Knot."

"Great heavens—is that his wife?" said Pauline. "What a fright! What clothes! How on earth can he stand her?"

I looked at the lady myself. "Oh, come now!" My protest was unfeigned. "And, after all," I added, after another scrutiny, "isn't she good enough for a

man whose sole excuse for existence is that he invented a necktie?"

Pauline laughed and pointed a rouged finger tip at my Cochon Royal aux Truffles.

I was annoyed. "Perhaps," I said, "it may surprise you to learn that Cuthbert has just told me all."

Her self-control is admirable. "By all, you mean—"

"Your agreement to part for a time and each feather your nest."

"How could I tell, when I made that compact, that I should meet and fall in love with you?" she parried.

"I am rich," I retorted suspiciously.

"But you are robust," she said. "Just look at the way you can eat that stuff without showing any ill effects. If Cuthbert told you all, as you say, he surely explained that the plan was self-sacrificingly to cheer the declining years of some hopeless invalid."

I looked again at the widow of the Cobalt King. "She isn't so very old, you know."

Pauline leaned forward, dimpling.

"She is a chronic dyspeptic with a weak heart. The doctor warranted she wouldn't last two years, I'm told, but Cuthbert, who knows nothing about business terms, thought 'warranted' meant the same thing as 'guaranteed.' Rough on him, isn't it?"

"A chronic dyspeptic? Is that why he brings her to the Café des Gourmets for supper?"

"I don't know," laughed Pauline. "Why don't you go over and offer her some Cochon Royal aux Truffles? A doctor once told me that is the deadliest viand on the list. The strongest constitution can't withstand your invention as a steady diet."

My name is Boggs, and I am from Chicago, but some ancestor of mine must have been one of the heroes of the Cinquecento—famed for his subtle revenges.

Since that memorable evening no smallest morsel of Cochon Royal aux Truffles has passed my lips.



THE SON OF SUBE

By Julian Johnson

KATO'S wife, Sube, died more than twenty years ago. Sube went across the River of Souls to fetch her little son, Subi, into the glad light of his father's eyes, and she did not return.

The Japanese in San Francisco had christened Kato and Sube "the new moon lovers," since every evening, after his washing of glasses in Doyle's saloon, after his last bowl of sawdust had been distributed on the floor, Kato and Sube, hand in hand, would wander wherever there were trees and flowers, and on evenings when the moon was large they would climb to the height where now rises the Fairmont, and sit for hours in the pale glow, most often staring silently out over San Francisco Bay. A ship would enter the Gate of Gold, and Kato would discover for his wife the first faint twinkle of her lights; Sube would nod delightedly, and in a rough purr he would tell her all about ships, and them that went to sea, and of his own voyage in the hold from Yokohama.

Sube herself had been born in Portland, and never wearied of Kato's tales of the shrines and temples and wayside dells and the colossal sacred mountain in the land of her ancestors. He called her "The Ivory Chrysanthemum," and she had a word for him which meant "American Samurai." He loved her very deeply. They had not much money, but Kato earned nine dollars a week as general help at Doyle's, and often Sube, a mistress of the needle, embroidered kimonos for the itinerant Yanko, who sold to the ladies of Sutro Heights.

When Sube—the new moon that night fell in benediction straight upon their foreheads, according to the three thousand and first tradition—when Sube whis-

pered shyly to Kato that some day she might present him a little son, his joy knew no bounds. But he did not wait in idle happiness. He went to old man Doyle's house on California Street and asked permission to cut the lawn and oil the harness and chop firewood—a permission Doyle readily granted, and, for some ten or fifteen dollars' worth of extra labor, graciously raised his pay three dollars per week. Yet at that time twelve dollars every seven days was probably more money than was earned by any other Japanese boy in San Francisco. Sube was very proud of Kato, and at her little Buddha she prayed every morning and evening that she might have a wonderful son like him. She did not go out very much toward the last; she was very frail, and she resembled exactly the pale blossom he had named her. Her little mouth grew more and more sensitive, and as is the way with women at that time, she wept a great deal without knowing why, and Kato said that often he found even her lips wet with tears.

As the husband entered the cypress shade of his own Gethsemane, Suski, the priest, endeavored to console him, but, like a tragic emperor, his eyes of dull-hot iron and his mouth of crucible steel, he faced them all. "It is the will of the gods! She has triumphed. I have a son—a son! His name shall be like hers, and Subi, the son of Sube, shall be great in his own land, and his mother shall sit among the five thousand immortal honorable women!"

Little Subi went from the humble Kearny Street dwelling in which he was born to the family of Sube's sister, who had come from Portland, and whose husband was a market gardener upon the

long peninsula. Subi had Sube's eyes, and there was even more life in the ivory of his cheeks. Rolling about out of doors, like a weak-legged calf, he was soon the chubbiest and rosiest of babies. Kato spent one day each week with his son. Two evenings every week he went to the grave of Sube with real chrysanthemums, and put fresh water in the tin which contained their stems, so that they would remain bright many hours. They were not white nor yellow, but always of that alluring ivory which had been Sube's cheek and brow. They were hard to find in tint, and sometimes they were bitterly expensive. But, unfailingly, they were in the earth above her quiet bosom.

The funeral expenses of Sube quite wiped out Kato's savings, nearly four hundred dollars, and, to economize, he moved into a portion of the wine bin, under Doyle's front sidewalk. He was building another bank account. For Subi. There was not, nor could there be, another woman.

When Subi was six it suddenly occurred to Kato that one of Japan's future great ones would be very much ashamed to have a father who was a porter, even a head porter—you see, he had moved down to Market Street and the Palace Hotel. So he went to the small bank with which he did business to take therefrom his \$976.14—enough to inaugurate modest, but independent shop-keeping. The bank had closed its doors that very day. Kato's nine hundred had gone into a mirage bonanza in Mazatlan, and the conjurer of the mirage had booked luxurious passage to Honduras. For the second—and last—time in his life, Kato wept.

In a more reasonable moment he realized that another six years would pass before a change from man to master, upon his part, would become imperative to establish the standing of the boy. He procured a concession for a fruit stand, and made the youngest of the Palace porters its keeper. In two years he had two more fruit stands. When Subi was nine, Kato had more than three thousand dollars in the Nevada Bank. There it was quite safe. Calm about the future now,

Kato planned, not a little business, but a big business, with a starting capital of at least six thousand dollars.

At the age of ten, Subi was told by Kato of his destiny. The imaginative little lad listened, wonder-eyed, to his father's reverential narrative of the Mikado's predestination as the Son of Heaven. That the Emperor was a real Prince of the Sky neither Kato nor Sube for a moment doubted. In a haze of ambitious dreams, Subi went to an American school. He saw himself a three-sword man in fierce mustachios and a turbulent kimono that covered him nowhere; or he was fat as a prosperous toad, of six-foot circumference, and the champion wrestler of Yeddo. But Kato, who had considerable shrewd foresight though not much imagination, pictured his son a cabinet minister—perhaps Prime Minister of all Japan! The New England spinster who took little Subi through the primary grades told his father that she believed her pupil had incipient literary talent. Kato regarded this as a manifestation of the Divine Intent direct: were not almost all Prime Ministers great gentlemen of letters? That very evening, upon the now sunken grave of Sube, in the cool night wind from the Farallones, waved a clustered mass of rich ivory chrysanthemums. That Subi liked his teacher to read him "Snow-Bound," for the simple reason that snow was a new element in his small universe, Kato did not know.

When Subi was half through the grammar grades, Kato established a little art shop upon O'Farrell Street.

Now Sube, in that one wonderful year of life with her lover-husband, had instilled into his practical though ambitious mind many of her own fine ideas. When they would walk out on Sunday afternoons, especially during the months before Subi was born, she would pause before all the art shops, and quickly point out the good and the bad, the flash and the masterpiece. Sube often gazed wistfully at the gorgeous screens, with half-naked fishermen or Fujiyama sunsets; but she did not say anything about desiring such a screen, for she knew that Kato could not afford it, and she did not

wish to hurt his feelings. So she contented herself with a sort of standing admiration—sometimes for half an hour—while she described minutely the good and bad points of the work, and told her husband at length of the little tricks in painting and embroidery. She knew about carvings, too, for her uncle had been a master manipulator of ivory, and had wrought for her, as a little girl, seven marvelous elephants on a single tusk.

Sube now became the over-goddess of Kato's shop. Every time he bought a bit of *Cloisonné* or *Satsuma*; everywhere that he looked for trinkets, from sandalwood boxes to windbells; whenever the wholesalers offered him bargains in silk and snaps in wicker, he faced the prospective purchase with Sube's clear judgment. Did it approach the Sube standard, he chose it. Had the screen-embroidered harbor of Nagasaki the little flaws or bad workmanship that she had so cunningly detected and pointed out upon the asphalt side of the pane? He would have none of it!

There was the expected struggle for establishment, embittered because Kato was an alien, and naturally to be suspected, but by and by the Crockers and the Huntingtons and the Calhouns swept down upon his Oriental rendezvous, and Kato became the most successful Japanese in San Francisco. He brought Subi to town and established him, with an English governess, in a splendid apartment. However humble their occupations, the Japanese are seldom common. Kato polishing the cuspidors in Doyle's was a super-gentleman compared to the water front loafers who made sport of him. Kato in the Palace Hotel commanded the porters with the air of a general giving staff orders. Kato, the successful merchant, fitted easily into elegant clothes and the elegant manner. Subi, always pampered, yet retained his health in the keen San Francisco winds, and added the insolence of young nobility. Before he had passed the tenth grade he read the morning news to his father in almost perfect English. It was the unvarying miracle to Kato, sipping his tea, that Subi could find an "r" under his tongue.

Subi was rejected on a military academy application shortly after his twelfth year, for no other reason than that he was Japanese. Kato, who knew that the school was in a financial slough and really perishing for rich men's sons, deemed it monstrous that a lad destined by all the heroes in paradise to be a great minister, and possibly a war lord, should be banned by a professor with watery eyes and weak whiskers simply because the boy came not from his own starveling stock. Kato, at first, was for dynamic measures. Then he held a long consultation with the Japanese consul, and Subi went East with the latter's son, Noge, to a preparatory school in Massachusetts.

He did not return the following summer. Instead, he went to England with Noge and Noge's father, who had been transferred from San Francisco to Liverpool. The next year Kato decided to do his own buying, and also, for the first time, to revisit his old home. He sent for Subi in May, and Subi, dawdling, returned in July to his furiously impatient father. He was now taller than his father, wore Eton clothes, surreptitiously smoked cigarettes, donned spectacles when he read in the evening, was delighted with his trans-Pacific voyage, and frankly bored by his father.

It was a great moment for Kato when he entered Yoshi, the hill-sequestered village which had given him birth, and behind whose last houses lay the bones of his ancestors for a hundred generations. Kato's mother, bent, wrinkled, inalienably Japanese of another day, thought her grandson quite the most wonderful thing, save Fujiyama, in Japan, but she could understand neither his personality nor his conversation. His Japanese was not only classic but corroded, hers provincial and meager. After one night of mats and the wooden headblock, Subi demanded a bed and a pillow. The latter he received; the former had never been heard of in the home of his late august grandfather. He would not eat with chopsticks, and he averred that the continual country diet of rice and fish nauseated him.

As far as Kato was concerned, his rela-

tions with his family were respectful but no longer intimate. From the timid, doting mother to Kato's brother Sato, old and gray, still wading in a loincloth to plant rice for the sportive Englishman, Barclay, all stood in awe of the splendid philanthropist who had departed a pauper only to return a king. And Kato's visit at Yoshi was further saddened by Subi, who, after one of his father's rhapsodies upon the land that had given him birth, remarked: "As far as I am concerned, I would rather be in Chicago." And he added with Iagoish villainy: "Not that I like Chicago!"

Witnessing his father's silent but growing resentment, a few days later Subi went to him and sweetly explained. "It was not that I did not wish to return and dwell in Japan," said the lad; "rather, I do not feel myself worthy to be counted even among the servants of my own country. I am never ashamed to take my living from the barbarous Americans, but Japan is an idol I cannot desecrate."

The false, artificial, unboyish oratory was an unqualified success. When their mutual embrace had subsided, Subi had no doubt that he could return to America and live, effortless and well, as many years as he willed. To continue his little play, he allowed Tokyo to interest him, whereupon Kato deemed that his son, formed even in his mother's womb for mastery in a great city, was not only wise but right in rejecting the country. After diligent search, he found a friendly tea merchant to whom the officer of public instruction was obligated. He procured an introduction, and, fawning as was not his wont, begged that Subi be taken through the Imperial Offices. The lad walked at his guide's side, while the almost overwhelmed Kato, following, pointed out from chamber to chamber the seats upon which, in future years, his son would sit, where he might receive visitors from the districts and from foreign countries—where he could and would mold policies to make the Triple Alliance tremble! Subi, not unwilling to act, though perpetually unwilling to work, nodded and smiled in pleasant agreement.

Those days in Tokyo were really the

happiest Kato had known since Sube's death. He was full of the most wonderful plans, not only for his son's appointment as a secretary, and his eventual rise to full ministerial power, but for the establishment of a home, for his marriage to some Japanese lady of aristocracy and breeding, for the glorification of the name of his peasant family in this its final regal flower; and more softly he spoke of a mausoleum on the Yoshi hillside for the precious dust of Sube. Beside hers, some day, he desired his own body to rest. There would be many carvings and a bronze tablet perpetuating her beauty, her wit and her virtue, and a shrine to Buddha, with candles burning perpetually, and always the ivory chrysanthemums, so that the memory of the warm dusk in her cheek and brow should never die.

During the next five years Kato saw very little of Subi. The boy began at Yale, switched to Harvard's "Gold Row," finished at Columbia without a degree—went to Bonn. Yet he never forgot to evince a polite interest in his fatherland which he did not once feel. Just before the earthquake and fire Kato sold his stores—the one had been multiplied by four—and his money passed through the holocaust in the vaults of the Nevada Bank. He trafficked in real estate with his rare ready capital over the entire reborn city. Then he became a banker. When Subi was nineteen, his father was worth one million dollars.

Save for the incarnate idea of his country, Kato cared only for Subi. And even the tenderness of fatherhood gave way, for months together, to the fiercer devotion of commander to some heroic figure beneath his marshal's baton. In the eyes of Kato, the listless, brilliant, cunning, bad Subi was transfigured into a new Cromwell, if need for a Mongolian Cromwell there should be; if not that, he should be an Asiatic Disraeli, a dark Gladstone. Kato's money purchased him the information that an assistant secretaryship in the Premier's office would be vacated in two months. Instantly he summoned his son from Monte Carlo, where he had understood that Subi was taking a course in oceanology under the Prince of Mo-

naco. Kato's cable was not explanatory. It was in two words: "Come home." Fearing that his father had been stricken by some fatal illness—a *contretemps* that demanded his presence at least for financial reasons—Subi lingered neither upon ceremony nor gambling debts.

There were great preparations in Berkeley for the coming of the future plenipotentiary. The north bedchamber, entirely fitted out in Circassian walnut and gold, was prepared with Subi's old, childish books and photographs, his tennis racket, his unused German steins, heaps of his favorite cigarettes, and, as a reminder of his Nipponesque destiny, a silver bottle of sake.

Subi arrived in the early evening, and, opening the door of the vestibule before the tardy servant could answer the bell, stood before a shrine in the entrance hall—an ornate structure of mahogany, within it a Buddha of solid gold, and, in a frame of ivory and pearls, the only existing photograph of his mother. Her sweet, simple face, with its high-piled hair, and beneath a suggestion of neat cotton kimono, looked out strangely and almost forlornly from this fane of worshipful magnificence; nevertheless, it was Kato's way, and the reverence of his love.

"What—" began the young man, dropping his bag.

"Not now—after dinner. Tell me all about yourself!" Waited upon by two servants, father and son progressed through a splendid though somewhat stiff repast. Subi had lost so much of his mother tongue that his father found it necessary to allow him to maintain his part of the conversation entirely in English.

After the coffee, and when Kato's cigar and Subi's sixth cigarette were well ignited, Kato rose silently and led the way into the teak-paneled library. This was his room of rooms: it was Oriental, but it was elegant, modern Japan. Upon the imported table, beneath the lotus flower that served as an electric shade, gleamed documents and letters, and a parchment from the Japanese Ambassador at Washington, so perfect and detailed had been the preparations.

Concluded Kato: "You will sail on the *Tsoya Maru*, one week from Monday."

Subi deliberated. "Couldn't they fix me up something in Europe?" Secretly, he longed to return to try his "system" on the wheels.

"In Europe? Why, you are going home—to your own capital!" Kato spoke in rapid Japanese.

"I don't wish to seem obstinate," returned Subi, "but I wouldn't really live in Tokyo if you gave me the place and made me Mikado. I want Europe, or New York—even Chicago, as I said once before. I was born in America, and while I may not be American, I'm equally not Japanese. Let's talk sense."

The anger, the passion, the hatred of bullying white men that had been suppressed for twenty years; the fury of ultimately disappointed ambition—these emotions swept Kato as an equinoctial gale in the China Sea sweeps the little fishing junks. Subi tried to back and compromise; he again essayed cajolery—and above the roar of the storm of rage his voice was soundless. For the first time in his life, fear of his father actually entered his heart. He powered at the door and shriekingly implored him not to wield the two-edged dagger he had torn from the wall. He seized his hat and fled baggageless from the house, while Kato screamed after him:

"I curse you with the spirits of all your ancestors! I disown you as a son! If you die, may it be your mother who conducts you across the River of Souls to hell! Whiten your face and make your eyes blue, for you are not a Japanese, but an English pig—a pig—a pig—a pig!"

In a day or two, Kato began to relent toward Subi. Asked by his secretary, Mr. Kinnuke, whether Subi had yet arrived, Kato replied that if he had he had not made his presence known. Without admitting the quarrel to even the most intimate of his friends, he cast out the feelers and tentacles possessed by men in his position for the acquiring of information. He combed San Francisco, Oakland, Alameda, Berkeley and the back country for the worthless, misguided youth, who was, after all, his boy, and

more than that, the son of Sube, who had died for him, and whose eyes of melting jet stared reproachfully into his every night through the sleepless dark of his plain bamboo chamber. Of course he would find him. He would not apologize, because he was a father with a father's rights, and above all an outraged servant of that son of the sun, the Mikado; but he would lead him gently and gradually into the light. He had been too sudden; he had expected that an almost-alien should at once grasp his patriotic viewpoint. Kato was sorry for his haste. He loved Subi.

As he was engaged in these reflections one morning, Mr. Kinnuke entered, frowning, biting his lips, staring at a rectangular slip of paper in his hand.

"I cannot understand, sir," said the secretary, "how you came to put such a date on your personal cheque to the Amato Company, variously indorsed and cashed. You know they passed out of existence four months ago, for you were one of the directors."

"An old cheque," said Kato.

"On the contrary, it's on our new style paper."

"Then it is a forgery!" cried the banker, leaping from his swivel chair. Looking at it closely, a curious feeling akin to faintness came over him. The big red desk seemed dancing. He sat down heavily. His signature was there, but there was a peculiar, unmistakable false curve at the base of the "K." He had noted that curve upon every letter from Europe.

"I can tell a forgery whenever I see one!" smirked Mr. Kinnuke, pleased with his own talent in detecting crime and saving the firm money.

"It is *not* forgery!" shouted Kato, with such suddenness and vigor that Mr. Kinnuke stepped into the coal scuttle. "Pay it! But," he added in a more moderate tone, "if here are any more like it, bring them instantly to me." Mr. Kinnuke bowed himself out in a foggy state of mind.

Returning to his desk, Kato wrote two notes. One was a commission to Adamson, the famous detective, temporarily at the St. Francis Hotel, to find Subi,

and having found him, merely to present him the envelope enclosed. Upon the sheet to Adamson, Kato pinned five one-hundred-dollar bills. Within the firmly sealed note to Subi was a short, curt message that each Saturday he would find, at the clerk's desk in the St. Francis, a cheque for fifty dollars; but that if he perpetrated further Amato paper, or any other forgeries, he would quickly and uncompromisingly be sent to San Quentin penitentiary. There was no call for his return, under any conditions.

Adamson found Subi that very day, and Subi experienced bitter pangs of remorse as he read, and even a momentary flash of poignant love for his suffering parent; he was degenerate, but human after all. He never reentered even the outer circle of his father's acquaintances. To all Kato's friends, he was still "studying in Europe." He won some money at gambling, but lived mainly within his unfailing allowance. Meanwhile, Kato ordered the mausoleum for Sube, at Yoshi, and told his astonished architects to spend one hundred thousand dollars.

On a January day, when wind and rain swept bleakly down together, the card of Dr. Adachi Azuki was brought in by Mr. Kinnuke. As a matter of courtesy, he asked Mr. Kinnuke to show him in, for he was the most brilliant young Japanese physician in San Francisco, yet he did not propose to loan him any money. Experience had taught Kato that collateral, not profession, is the one unfailing security. Mr. Kinnuke entered with Dr. Azuki, and remained at attention.

"May I speak with you alone, please?" Dr. Azuki spoke almost brusquely. Mr. Kinnuke bowed and retired.

"Well, sir?"

"I was called to the Barbary Coast this morning by the proprietor of the Midway dance hall, and there I found, ill and delirious, also under the influence of liquor, your son."

"Impossible!" The protective spirit ran to the last.

"Not only possible, but a fact," said Dr. Azuki. "I verified his identity from materials in his pockets—but I am the only one who knows. At the moment he is not in the best of quarters, but I

didn't dare move him far, and at that time I had no knowledge of his identity. He is in a hotel, if you wish to call it that, on Kearny Street."

Kato felt as though his collar were choking him. "On Kearny Street!" he whispered to himself. Then, aloud: "We will go out this way. There will be a machine at the corner."

Though the great fire had obliterated every landmark, Kato felt certain that the institution of inebriety, crime and depravity in front of which their chauffeur finally braked was almost, if not quite, on the site of the humble little house in which the divine Sube had lived, and in which Subi had been born. They went up the creaking stairs, past slatternly women, strong arm men and cocaine fiends.

"Here!" said Dr. Azuki, throwing open a door. The gas flickered in the sudden draught. On the foot of the bed sat the doctor's boy, an imperturbable young Chinaman. On his back, his eyes almost but not quite closed, his breath fluttering in rapid, shallow inspirations, lay Subi.

"Pneumonia," said Dr. Azuki—"a severe attack; but if we can keep the patient's heart going for the next twenty-four hours he will come through nicely. I have here a combination pellet of digitalis, strychnine and adrenaline—a little discovery of my own, by the way—designed to overcome the inertia of one whose heart has"—Dr. Azuki stopped to cough—"through illness, become accustomed to the stimulus of drugs."

Kato caught the physician's wrist. "You know that I know he has never been ill enough to require drugs habitually. Has he—"

"Well, if you want the truth—yes. Morphine, the old way of the needle. You'll find the scars on the inside of his legs."

As Dr. Azuki busied himself in the silence, the voice of Kato fell upon his ear—quite loudly, as he thought.

"Doctor," said the banker, "I will stay with my son until you return with the ambulance."

"But I am just sending the boy for a nurse—"

"I will stay. There is no need for a nurse now."

"As you wish," said Dr. Azuki, bowing; "but you must understand that the forcing of one of these pellets between his lips every thirty minutes is absolutely imperative. In his case, I can do nothing hypodermically at present. Do you understand?"

"I understand you—quite," said Kato.

"Then," said Dr. Azuki, "I will go to the hospital, where I am to assist at an operation. I will return at nine with a nurse and an ambulance."

Kato sat for thirty minutes, the pellets in his hand. His son did not move, nor sigh, nor change his breathing. Kato glanced at his watch. Thirty-five minutes. He observed the ivory of his dead mother's face upon the boy's sunken cheek and across his brow. Even his mouth, Kato noticed for the first time, was much like hers, save that it lacked her sweet strength.

An hour. Kato rose stiffly, for he had scarce moved a finger in his tense sentinella. He went to the bed. The breathing was shallower, more rapid. He could detect no pulse. Subi's wrist was cold. Kato clasped his hands above his head. Then he went to the window, found his direction, and, facing Sube's grave, placed his forehead upon the floor, and remained thus many minutes, motionless. Without turning, when he rose he crossed on tiptoe to the ill-smelling washbowl, set in a corner of the room, and poured the entire contents of the vial down the drain pipe, making sure of its complete effacement by sending after it a sluggish stream from the faucet. He glanced rapidly, fearfully, at the bed; Subi's face was all ivory now, but an eyelid, fluttering, showed life. Kato hastily turned his face away and went to the window.

There was a shingled roof opposite, and monotonously, in the light from the rattling, laughter-ridden poolroom beneath, he fell to counting the individual shingles. He remembered, with a start, that he had done the same thing when Sube lay dying. The thought dispossessed him of his enumeration, and, laboriously, like a sewerman who handles a pencil only to mark the payroll, he

commenced the calculation once more. Counting across, he inevitably became confused. Three times he tried that way, with three different results. He determined to count up and down, from left to right. He was at the fifteenth row, and proceeding quite satisfactorily. . .

Dr. Azuki came in, quickly but quietly. As he entered, Kato bowed his head in his hands, but he did not speak. In a moment the physician gave a sharp exclamation.

"Did you do as I told you? Did you give him those tablets?" There was the iron of anger in the doctor's snapping, rasping tone.

Kato turned and held up the empty vial. The final tragedy, written upon his face, sounded in his voice. "They are all gone, Doctor," he said.

"My poor, newfound friend!" exclaimed Dr. Azuki, stepping toward

Kato, and extending both his hands. "My sympathy—my heartiest sympathy!"

Kato stood stiffly erect, as upon that other long-gone day of woe.

"I thank you for your sympathy, Dr. Azuki, but I do not need it. I am quite happy, for it is the will of the gods."

The Chinese boy had entered. Kato pressed forward.

"Get me a hundred ivory chrysanthemums," he said, in a sharp, hasty voice, "and bring them here—"

It was Dr. Azuki who interrupted. "But they will be—they will be taking him to the undertaker's presently, you know."

"No matter!" thundered Kato. "Keep the ivory chrysanthemums always with him. If those are left or lost, buy a hundred more—always he must be sleeping beneath ivory chrysanthemums!"



TELL ME

By Edgar Saltus

BENEATH the stupor of Carpathian skies
 Ascend, through bleak immensities of space,
 Heights upon heights about whose sterile base
 Some sunless plant droops for a while and dies.
 But higher, where the whitening peaks arise,
 Rigid and spectral in the snow's embrace,
 Supremely there the gods have cared to place
 The perfect symbol of their paradise.
 Poets will tell you of the men who fell
 From sudden altitudes to death below
 In vain attempt to pluck that flower of ice.
 Shall I fall also to some mute white hell
 For love of that pure blossom of the snow—
 For love of you, my human Edelweiss?



YOUNG man, if you are in love, be sure you don't write, then go ahead.

PERTINENT AND IMPERTINENT

By Owen Hatteras

LITANY: CANTO III.

From haircloth sofas, and from head waiters; from hotel soap, and from Canton flannel nightgowns; from pie à la mode, and from low buttoned shoes; from the works of Hamilton Wright Mabie, and from pianos with mandolin attachments; from domestic beer, and from thumping radiators; from ardent women, and from crème de menthe highballs; from wrist watches, and from the theory of least squares; from decimal points, and from home cooking; from roller blotters, and from the *spirochate pallida*; from professional moralists, and from all things overdue; from pneumatic busts, and from the Boy Scouts; from promiscuous adverbs, and from suspenders; from amateur theatricals, and from husbands—good Lord deliver us!

FAMOUS WOMEN OF PROFANE HISTORY

Myrtle.
Pearl.
Mabel.
Agnes.
Blanche.

THINGS GREATLY OVERESTIMATED

Honesty.
Arnold Bennett.
Virginity.

HORRIBLE THINGS TO CONTEMPLATE

Twins.
Heaven.
Getting caught.
Tetrazzini *au naturel*.

April, 1913.—4.

LITERARY IMPRESSIONS

Robert W. Chambers—A spring wood ... lingering kisses ... a gasp ... a yielding ... surprised by a minister ...

Richard Le Gallienne — Perfumed cigarettes ... silver lace ... a choir of tenors ... the Blessed Damosel in a Tuxedo ... a Chopin nocturne ... moonlight on the oleanders.

George Moore—Perfume spilled in a sacristy ... a silken garter in a psalter ... Lola Montez baking bread ... the Pope at Maxim's ...

Jack London—A pool of blood ... a trombone cadenza ... corned beef and cabbage ... a bull in a blizzard ... a stevedore playing Rachmaninoff ...

Henry James—Shooting the chutes ... eating hair ... stranded in a captive balloon ...

Arnold Bennett—Grease spots, mustache, spectacles and pimples—but no man ... windows, doors, nails, paint and vines—but no house ...

William De Morgan—Paralytics at chess ... ancestral portraits ... the scent of moth balls ...

Maeterlinck—Dining in an ossuary ... a prestidigitator performing for the blind ... Chinese cooking ... Mother Goose plus Swedenborg ...

THE agents of argumentation under a free democracy, in the order of their efficacy

1. Whiskey.
2. Beer.
3. Cigars.
4. Tears.
5. Noise.

THE three most dangerous enterprises in the world

- (1) To interfere between husband and wife.
- (2) To recommend a doctor.
- (3) To tell the truth.

RESPECTABILITY—That state of being in which all the natural instincts are held to be obscene; virtue grown virulent; the pathological fear of naughtiness.

ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN—Be ascetic, and if you can't be ascetic, then at least be aseptic.

CIVILIZATION is man's effort to remedy the blunders and check the practical joking of the Creator

A PROMINENT CITIZEN—Any male who owns a dress suit, is a member of two expensive clubs, is opposed to child labor, acts as honorary pallbearer at at least four funerals a year; is a member of at least two public boards or commissions which never meet, prefers a musical comedy to "Tristan and Isolde," owns a "library addition" of Guy de Maupassant bought from a book agent; regards all Socialists as scoundrels, has a theory to account for all money panics, possesses only one wife, sends his children to Sunday school as a punishment for petty misdemeanors, believes in free will and the greatness of Charles Dickens, is (or wishes he were) director of a national bank, has his shoes shined every day, cultivates an illegible signature, thinks it is immoral for a working-man to get drunk on a Saturday night, contributes to all relief funds managed by newspapers, rides in a taxicab, constantly argues that the country is going to the dogs—and wears a stick.

THE TEST OF TRUTH

THE test of truth is ridicule. Very few religious dogmas have ever faced it and survived. Huxley laughed the devils out of the Gadarene swine. Dowie's whiskers broke the back of

Dowieism. Not the laws of the United States but the mother-in-law joke brought the Mormons to compromise and surrender. Not the horror of it, but the absurdity of it killed the doctrine of infant damnation—but the razor edge of ridicule is turned by the tough hide of truth. How loudly the barber surgeons laughed at Harvey—and how vainly! What clown ever brought down the house like Galileo? Or Columbus? Or Jenner? Or Lincoln? Or Darwin? . . . They are laughing at Ibsen yet!

PSYCHOTHERAPY is the theory that the patient will probably get well anyhow, and is certainly a damned fool.

VIRTUE is a device for making death less horrible—Virtue is the will without the deed—Virtue is its own punishment.

LADY—The exquisite and legless orchid of the species.

THE proverbial philosophy of the American people:

Set a cop to grab a cop.

The more faster you go, the sooner you don't get there.

One swaller don't make no load.

Once a child gets burnt once it won't never stick its hand in no fire no more.

HAPPINESS is peace after strife, the overcoming of difficulties, the feeling of security and well-being. The only really happy folk are married women and single men.

ONCE I lay in hospital a fortnight while an old man died by inches across the hall. Apparently a very painful, as it was plainly a very tedious business. I could hear him breathing heavily for fifteen or twenty minutes, and then he would begin shrieking in agony and yelling for his orderly: "Charlie! Charlie! Charlie!" Now and then a nurse would come into my room and report progress: "The old hyena's kidneys have given up; he can't last the

night," or, "I suppose the next choking spell will fetch him." Thus he fought his titanic fight with the gnawing rats of death, and thus I lay listening, myself quickly recovering from a sanguinary and indecent operation. Did the shrieks of that old man startle me, worry me, torture me, set my nerves on edge? Not at all. I had my meals to the accompaniment of piteous yells to God, but day by day I ate them more heartily. I lay still in bed and read a book or smoked a cigar. I damned my own twinges and fading malaises. I argued

heatedly and ignorantly with the surgeons. I made polite love to the nurses who happened in. At night I slept soundly, the noise retreating benevolently as I dropped off. And when the old fellow died at last, snarling and begging for mercy with his last breath, the unaccustomed stillness made me feel lonesome and sad, like a child robbed of a tin whistle. But when a young surgeon came in half an hour later, and, having dined to his content, testified to it by sucking his teeth, cold shudders ran through me from stern to stern.



APRIL SONG

By Willard Huntington Wright

OH, it's hey, for the hoidenish April,
 With crocuses rife in her hair,
 And the blustering green on the meadows,
 And the tang of the raucous air.

Oh, the April's flush is a symbol
 Of the lust of the buried kings,
 Of the red primordial passions
 That racked the beginning of things.

The winds and the hills and forests
 Are the palpitant after-note
 Of the lips and the laughter of Lilith,
 And the sensual throbs of her throat.

For Nature and all of her children
 Are athirst with an ancient desire;
 Their brains are mad with its music,
 And their blood is a flame with its fire.

So it's hey, for the crimson sunsets!
 And it's ho, for the dawn's red break!
 For half of the world is a harlot,
 And half the world's a rake.

A BALLAD OF TOO MUCH BEAUTY

By Richard Le Gallienne

THERE is too much beauty upon this earth
For lonely men to bear,
Too many eyes, too enchanted skies,
Too many things too fair;
And the man who would live the life of a man
Must turn his eyes away—if he can.

He must not look at the dawning day,
Or watch the rising moon;
From the little feet, so white, so fleet,
He must turn his eyes away;
And the flowers and the faces he must pass by
With stern self-sacrificing eye.

For beauty and duty are strangers forever,
Work and wonder ever apart,
And the laws of life eternally sever
The ways of the brain from the ways of the heart;
Be it flower or pearl, or the face of a girl,
Or the ways of the waters as they swirl.

For beauty is sorrow, and sorrowful men
Have no heart to look on the face of the sky,
Or hear the remorseful voice of the sea,
Or the song of the wandering wind in the tree,
Or even watch a butterfly.

Ah! Beauty is such a hallowed thing,
So holy a flower in the garden of God,
That none but the holy should dare to look
On the painted page of that sacred book,
Look in the eyes of spring,
Or hear the morning sing.



SAID Oscar Wilde: "Each man kills the thing he loves"—for example, the amateur musician.

THE AMATEUR BOHEMIAN

A Page From the Book of Broadway

By George Bronson Howard

CHARLES LESTER LINTHICUM was one of many who claim that conventions appall their free and vibrant natures, but would as soon be seen without pants as wearing a turn-over collar with a dress coat, or a stock in the city. His insistent claim to Bohemianism was founded principally on the fact that he gave little dinners in his studio attended by women, who, accustomed to liveried footmen handing plates and butlers filling glasses, said it was "too quaint" to be served by Linthicum's man unassisted, and to meet others of Linthicum's profession—writing fellows whom Linthicum treated with an overdone familiarity.

Linthicum first injected himself into the life of Broadway as a dramatic reviewer for a weekly founded at his own suggestion by young Harrington James, a person with too large an income to spend unaided by skilled assistants. *Broadway Brummel* was to fill a long-felt want. Being endowed, it sought not popular favor, but was to be a magic glass through which all mundane affairs were to be seen from the standpoint of the upper class. Society, polo, yachting, motoring, aviation and the stage—chiefly it had to do with these. A foreign visitor reading this agreeable periodical, and this only, must have imagined the United States in no way dissimilar to the United Kingdom. Its chronicles bore to actualities no greater relation than the tales of Hans Christian Andersen. And of all the necromancing goose quills in its service, none surpassed that of Charles Lester Linthicum. His stories of the mimic world

were those of a glorified society reporter. Legitimate actresses gave high teas and receptions and conducted themselves generally like leaders of fashion. Soubrettes became playful, frolicsome débutantes. Show girls seemed to him as the swans must have looked to the ugly duckling. Here, indeed, was the fairy world of enchantment which youngsters anticipate while the orchestra crashes out the overture; the gay, yet innocent, life of a matinee girl's dream; the land to which music wafts the imaginative, and where they remain, alas, only so long as the music lasts.

II

STAGE folk put on their Sunday best faces for Linthicum. Pellucid as he was, a person soon learned what he wanted one to be, and to be that one was amazing easy for mimes, accustomed for four hours, and twice a week eight, to play other parts than the ones assigned them by Mother Nature. He learned that most show girls were from the South, and, had it not been for the war, would be presiding at the ancestral tea urn.

Those lacking unlucky ante-bellum ancestors seemed to have crowded the convents of the North, and he had yet to meet one without some claim to distinguished relatives and careful bringing up.

"Be careful, Lottie, you're laying it on too thick."

"What—with this mark?" Carlotta had whispered back. "Say, take it from me, he'll stand for anything."

It was on the occasion of Carlotta's first meeting with Linthicum, and she had been telling him how distasteful it was for a sweet, refined girl to wear tights—Lottie, whose limbs had been paragraphed more than infrequently, and who, like the girl in the comedian's story, got thirty-five dollars a week for "Hip, hip, huray"—thirty-four dollars and ninety-nine cents for the two "hips." The remainder of the story of Lottie's early life her friend had allowed to pass in silent disapproval, but, as she afterward phrased it in telling the incident in the dressing room, "Lottie's work was raw as a Lynnhaven on the half-shell." At which Lottie, making up at a far corner of the long dressing room, looked over and grinned mischievously.

"Well, I got away with it, didn't I? What's the use of thinking up good stuff for a mark like that? I spotted him right away as the kind who says, 'No matter what they are, I always treat them as I'd treat Mrs. Astor. They appreciate it, poor souls.'"

Lottie's imitation of a gentlemanly young wine dispenser proved that better things than chorus work were waiting for her in the near future when her opportunity to "make good" should come. Of her talents Lottie was well aware; her lack of opportunity she deplored, but, with the confidence and sanguinity of children of the Nightless Lane, waited for it to come, and did the best she could in the front row. She was never out of an engagement, for she was on Bob Ledyard's books. Lottie was what he called a "good worker," being dependent on her wages and therefore not apt to come late in a taxicab with a frayed excuse.

Lottie never went to gay supper parties in private dining rooms: firstly, because she hated the half-ceremonious, half-contemptuous treatment of that kind of men; secondly, because she preferred to choose her company, unless she was penniless; and thirdly, for the reason that she believed that some day her name would be in electric letters, and she did not want young bucks to be entitled to say languidly that they had "had her out" when she was one of the

spear carriers. After the theater, she liked to be with the company manager, the librettist or composer, the press agent, some song writers, some vaudevillians and some other girls in a party and listen to the men talk "shop," occasionally putting in an apt phrase, which caused those gentlemen to give her sharp looks and to invite her out again. Several times she had love affairs with librettists, both resulting in lines for her to say, and, in the last instance, an understudy. She was now generally known as a "line girl" (one to be trusted with "bits," and an understudy if necessary), but this present engagement necessitated voices of grand opera calibre for the understudies, so her chance had been deferred.

This night, as she turned matters over in that busy little brain of hers, she decided to make much of Charles Lester Linthicum. Her former experience with authors had taught her the jargon of the writing clan, a little of which she had used to good effect on Linthicum during their brief dinner talks; but, of course, she understood she must treat him far differently from the librettists.

Some sixth sense told Lottie that Linthicum would be waiting for her that night; and, as she stepped past the doorkeeper, a taxi driver proved her prophecy by handing her a note on the paper of a smart supper place; a note that apologized for Linthicum's absence, pleading a lack of desire to be classed as a stage door Johnnie, and would she take the taxicab and join him? At supper she coruscated. She said all of the usual things about how musical shows have deteriorated since Gilbert and Sullivan; how horseplay has taken the place of real wit—and various other stock statements she had heard her literary friends make when their wits were dull and they must say something to pass the time.

She had the opportunity of saying later to a timid proposal in a taxicab:

"Mr. Linthicum, if I wanted a furnished apartment of my own I could have had one long, long ago. Yes, and if I'd taken it, I wouldn't be in the chorus. With my voice and looks, I might be getting part of my pay in

'three sheets' now, my face on every billboard in New York. But—"

It required some courage to finish the sentence. Lottie, who had a hothouse sense of humor— However, a long breath and she managed it:

"I'm not that kind of a girl, Mr. Linthicum."

"I'm glad—I'm awfully glad," Linthicum had burst out, and then, as her eyes looked astonished inquiry, he blundered on apologetically: "You see, they're always trying to make out you stage girls are so—so—well, you know. Simply looking for a man to—er—assist them—almost *any* man. And I liked you so much tonight—you're so different—I was determined I'd find out before I got to care too much about you. For I do care, Lottie. You don't mind me calling you 'Lottie'—"

She had withdrawn her hand gently.

"No, I don't mind *that*," she said in her purest tones. "But you mustn't talk about caring for me—we girls hear too much of that. And you say I'm different—I thought *you* were different, too, or I shouldn't have gone to supper with you."

He drove away from the apartment hotel where she lived wildly intoxicated by "the perfume of her presence"—four dollars a bottle and used a drop at a time. Here was the right sort of girl—Bohemian, a good pal, could understand a man's work, not mercenary, and as straight as his own sister. (We copy the Linthicum verbiage.) She sat, fully dressed, for some time, thinking. Here was a man—money, position, and best of all, influence with the managers. *Broadway Brummel* was the directory of the swagger crowd so far as amusements were concerned; and he was *Broadway Brummel* in so far as it concerned the theatrical world. Her cue was merely to read up on things likely to interest him, be "not that kind of a girl," and tell him that he must prove that he really cared as he said he did—make her learn to care for him by helping her to attain her ambitions; a "not that kind of a girl" girl had too small a chance with managers' pets and authors' pets and—

Authors' pet! She was seized with

sudden alarm. Whereupon she sat down and hastily indited a letter, enjoining secrecy. "It is all over now, and I've met someone whom I care for, and who wouldn't look on things the way we do." The envelope bore the name of a well known librettist.

III

UP to this period, Lottie had been as are countless other pretty denizens of the Nightless Lane. She crammed her feet into a modicum of toe, and slanted them upward at an angle of forty-five degrees until her heels rested on three or four inches of hard leather—"short vamp" shoes the profession called them; her stockings cost half a dollar and were silk only to the knees, for she economized on every other article of apparel to buy new and attention-compelling headgear.

Soon after Linthicum's entry into her life, one would have picked her out of any Broadway crowd and wondered what she was doing away from Fifth Avenue. In tailored clothes, relieved from mannishness by soft jabots and cuffs, in simple hats with a single quill or feather, her hair arranged girlishly instead of twisted onto the current coiffure, Lottie looked like Linthicum's sister—which was what Linthicum aimed at. This metamorphosis effected, he smuggled her into unimportant teas and parties given by the smart "Bohemian" world, where foregathered well known English actors, the better class of literary and artistic folk who are comfortable in dress clothes, and a sprinkling of those of the *Social Register*. Lottie listened, picked up their patter, learned to enunciate her words after the English fashion, learned to deplore the fact that ladies and gentlemen did not go on the stage here in America as they do in England and discovered that one who devoted a life to the amassing of money was to be despised and rejected by all real people.

Lottie looked upon all this as a clever child looks on schooling: hating the school and the masters, but realizing the

necessity of the education. After such an afternoon, what a relief to get to the dressing room and give imitations for her companion coryphées of those she had met; how refreshing to have the comedian put a careless arm around her waist and kiss her if he felt so inclined, not because he cared anything for her, but because her kind of people were affectionate and undignified, not always thinking of what was "good form"; to go, afterward, if some lucky chance kept Linthicum engaged elsewhere, to some little café where ragtime singers and dancers twirled and snapped their fingers, looking admiringly at her when the words happened to refer to a "beautiful doll" or a "wonderful girl." At such times she would grow excited and her pretty eyes would light up, and when she danced with some man of her party and his hand closed on hers, her little fingers would clasp it more tightly. Such men called her "honey child" and "dear" at their first meeting, and it was not necessary for her to pretend to be anything except what she was when she was with them; they liked her because she was their little playmate, Lottie, and they made love to her as they made love to all their little playmates; but a single word warned them and the love making ended without ill feeling, and, with equal cheerfulness and sincerity, the man made love to the girl on the other side of him. That is, unless the girl in question happened to be the sweetheart of a friend—in which case the men were as scrupulously careful as though the pair were married.

A queer little world with unwritten laws more binding than any in the statute books—a world that ceases to be at the entrance of an alien who would not understand. A tolerably well behaved world, too, a cheerful, hard-working world that takes nothing seriously except "getting on."

IV

In this world, then, Lottie met Tommy Hartsell. Tommy was what his companions called a "barroom comedian," which is to say that he made everybody

laugh except the public. True, he had not tried very hard to make the public laugh; for, so far, he had produced only lyrics for such songs as were demanded of him by his contract with his publishers. Tommy would sit up half the night composing some bit of local wit and cleverness which could amuse only those of a very limited circle; while to the work that brought him a scanty livelihood, because he did so little of it, he gave only the time absolutely necessary, taking his "dummy lyric" after a tune had been composed and writing in its place, almost as swiftly as another would write prose, some jingles that served its purpose well enough, but not any too well. To make a tableful of companions hold their sides with laughter was Tommy's chief ambition.

He took no women seriously, cared for them as a sex, giving none more than another, ready for an affair with any pretty one who fancied him first, but never exposing himself to defeat by making advances unless sure they were acceptable. A byword for fickleness, he promptly deserted any sweetheart after a month or so, and was so busy getting new ones that, at twenty-nine, he was in the same chronic state of pecuniary embarrassment he had inherited from a devil-may-care father.

Tommy carried a notebook in which he jotted down much useless information; among which was the number of times women had said to him: "You act the way you do because you've never been in love; some day you'll meet the woman, and she'll give you what you've given others. Then you'll know how it feels."

When Lottie added herself to the others who had made this remark, Tommy gravely inscribed her name, informing her that she was the three hundred and sixty-fifth.

"The most beautiful trait in women—to me," added Tommy, "is their affection for Thompson Hartsell. Until one of them has this wonderful trait, no matter how otherwise wonderful she is, I cannot become interested in her."

"That's because you're not a *real* man!" Lottie said scornfully.

"Like 'old lady Linthicum,' for instance?" he suggested mildly.

"If you were only half the man he is—" she said elliptically.

"I'd be listening to you repeat word for word things you've read and don't understand. Lottie, don't let that solemn ass make you forget that the first duty of pretty little girls like yourself is to be highly ornamental and inconsequentially joyous. You're a frank little pagan, and as a worshiper of Dionysus—I adore you."

She forgot her pose long enough to ask him who Dionysus was; he sounded like the sort of person an acquaintance with whom was likely to impress Linthicum.

"Well—I'm a Dionysian and so are you—because our pleasures are the natural results of untrammelled natures; while a hard-working business man out to make a night of it once or twice a week, drinking too much and taking his pleasures coarsely, is a Bacchanalian. Dionysus and Bacchus are—supposititiously—the same god—but, oh, what a difference in the morning!"

"It isn't as though you were a *real* man," Lottie persisted, because it seemed to be the only insult he could not answer. "You conceited thing! I wouldn't like to buy you at your own valuation."

"You could get me awful cheap," said Tommy. "As a matter of fact, I'm not much good any way you look at it. But it shall never be said of the last of the Hartsells that he was a polisher of peanuts."

His meaning eluded her, but the phrase won him a laugh.

"It's impossible to take you seriously," said Lottie. "What do you mean by polishing peanuts?"

"Plays—novels—short stories—poems—librettos—lyrics—any form of popular writing today—peanuts," returned Mr. Thompson Hartsell, for so he must be called when his eyes lose their merry spark and he ceases to be Pierrot and becomes philosopher. "Everything is sacrificed today to the tastes of the middle class. A play or a novel, even a foolish lyric such as I write, must have a kernel that is tasteful to the *bour-*

geoisie, and, since peanuts are the most *bourgeois* of nuts—peanuts! Thompson Hartsell will polish no peanuts for you."

Contrasting this superior attitude, which left him poor and unknown, with the serious attitude Charles Lester Linthicum observed toward his work—as though it were some sacred lamp burning in a barren waste—Carlotta wondered. To her, as to most people, plays produced for two dollars a seat and books published at one dollar and a half a copy were first class; others second, third, fourth and fifth rate according to the price people paid to see or to read them. That Linthicum was first class she had not doubted, while people of whom the public had never heard—like Hartsell—were naturally inferior intellects. Now their positions seemed reversed; for Linthicum stooped to take seriously the people that Hartsell despised.

"In so utilitarian a country as ours, few ever come to a realization that thoughts are actual existent things, the uses to which they are put only secondary," Hartsell went on, as though reading her mind. "Real philosophy lives while second rate deeds die. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle are alive today for what they were, and influence the lives of the seeker of knowledge, while there is meat in the popular plays of Aristophanes only for the antiquarian and the snuffy scholar."

He broke off with his usual laugh. "Reads just like a four-dollar subscription book, eh? Let's be Dionysians again," he said, and kissed her. He did it with force, almost with brutality, for when he talked as he had just done (which was seldom nowadays) he felt a great bitterness for the unknowing, unthinking world that placed no value on the treasures of the mind unless a spade and pickaxe unearthed the treasures and made them salable.

His action, so masterful, withal, so careless of her own wishes and desires, thrilled Lottie, and from that moment, whether he wanted her or not—and she was not sure he did—she was his. But she gave no indication of this surrender

beyond an instinctive return of his caress, for which she hated herself a second later.

"Don't be foolish," she said, referring to his action. "I like to hear you talk like that, Tommy. I do hate people not to be serious with me and talk about serious things."

V

As a direct result of this conversation, the great Charles Lester Linthicum decided to write a libretto.

For, from the moment Lottie fell in love with Tommy Hartsell, she forgot her own plans for advancement through Linthicum, and thought only how she could influence that most popular of all the best sellers to act as the god in the car for the proper recognition of Thompson Hartsell by a benighted public. Thus may we follow the somewhat devious workings of the young lady's mind:

"Of course I know Tommy is wonderful because I have a much better brain than most people, but the public doesn't know it; and when I am very famous I don't want people to have to ask: 'Who is that man with her?' I want them to say: 'Isn't that a good pair—the famous Carlotta Alleyne and the famous Thompson Hartsell.'

"And though Tommy may despise the public and the kind of work they admire, still he has just got to be brought to do something to be heard of. Charlie Linthicum loves the ground I walk on, so if I tell him he's the only man in the world who can write me the sort of part I can shine in, why Charlie will just do it, and I will suggest Tommy for writing the lyrics; and if I insist Charlie will insist, and the managers will have to like the libretto and lyrics and have music written for them, because Charlie's influence is too great for them to offend him—and besides, his name will be a great advertisement. And I will have him insist that there be a clause in the contract that no one else shall be permitted to rewrite any of the piece except the authors, and, of course, when

the piece goes into rehearsals almost everything Charlie writes will be cut out because he doesn't understand musical shows; and because of that clause in the contract, Tommy will have to rewrite it or close the show, and that will prove to the managers what Tommy can do; and then, when they come to him begging him to write shows, instead of him being too proud to beg them, as he is now, he will write them and be famous."

Which, on the whole, was a remarkable piece of synthesis for a young woman in the chorus.

The idea of the libretto having had a second birth in the brain of Mr. Charles Lester Linthicum, he hastened to the nearest manager and propounded the same. It was received cordially, for managers are ever alert for the famous recruit from Bookland, having heard much of the Gilbert-Messiah who is some day to appear; but the suggestion of Mr. Hartsell as a collaborator was frowned upon, the manager having lost the admiration of a young lady of whom he was fond through allowing Tommy to interpolate a number into a last season show.

"Unreliable; *might* turn out *one* good feature number, but *sure* to come across with *six* lemons. Hartsell's been dubbing around here for years; had all the chances in the world, but all he's good for is to fill Dithmar's catalogue with shop counter sheet music. Get a live one, Mr. Linthicum."

But the indefatigable Lottie had borrowed from Tommy various slips of frayed typewriting that he carried in his pockets and read to select assemblies of friends, and a man like Linthicum would recognize what the managers could not, the touch of the true artist. So he insisted on Hartsell and carried his point. Later the contract was shown to Nathan Morris, the firm's indispensable play doctor, who administered physic to shows about to leave "the road" for New York, and who carefully indexed every joke, situation and bright line he read in newspapers, foreign magazines and translations for possible use in the future.

"You signed a contract for an amateur

and a lunatic to write your summer *revue* that's got to go into rehearsal in a month, and you let 'em get a clause in that their work wasn't to be fixed up by me—I think you must be dippy, too."

"But think of the free advertisement Linthicum's name gives us—the first play by a man who writes a 'best seller' a year," chimed in the press agent. "Why, it'll be good for a column in every newspaper in the country. You know the stuff: 'It looks as though the old days of comic opera are returning when such men as Mr. Blank Blankety Blank, the author of "Sin and the Seventeen Sinners," that masterpiece of caustic *causerie*, turn their hands to work hitherto unfortunately given over to managers' hacks.' That happens whenever anybody but a regular librettist gets into the game, and Linthicum is the biggest fish in the literary pond."

"Yes, but who's to do the work, with that silly contract about nobody else working on the book?" howled Morris. "Hartsell—who thinks musical shows are a joke—who 'kids' his own stuff all the time? And who is this girl, Carlotta Alleyne, you've signed away a principal part to?"

"Oh, Lottie Allen? She's all right," answered the manager, brightening up. "She went on in May's place in 'The Princess' at a Wednesday 'mat,' and I always intended to do something for her but forgot."

VI

THIS is the story of how near to being right the play doctor was.

Linthicum read the "book" one Monday morning on the Garden stage, with the members of the cast drawn up in a semicircle around him: on one side of his table Tommy Hartsell, yawning intermittently; on the other, with a face of ghostly calm, the great Bob Ledyard, who had been engaged at five hundred a week to stage the production. Ledyard, after the first few pages, did not dare to raise his eyes for fear of meeting those of the "principals." In his opinion no play could be a success unless producer

and cast believed in it, and if any of the cast looked at him until he had recovered from his shock, they would know *he* began without faith.

Every now and then he stole a glance at the sleek and satisfied novelist, as he rambled on with discursive dialogue, pink tea witticisms and perverted puns. Whenever a character, not a gentleman, was introduced, it was to the accompaniment of a weird dialect—Bowery characters speaking of "blokes" and "toffs" as Whitechapel folk do; a negro making use of the adjective "mighty" every second speech and addressing everyone as "boss"; the comedy of a society climber, a woman, lying almost entirely in Malapropisms and barbarous misuse of a few simple French phrases; and the two comedians—there is no language in vogue in any modern country which could even dimly describe the two comedians' parts.

The people of the stage are polite, and always make it a point to laugh whenever their author seems to lay comic stress on a sentence; moreover they are easy to amuse; but in this case, they stopped straining themselves after the first act. All gazed inquiringly at Bob Ledyard, who, by this time master of himself, stared back in cold surprise.

"I will take the principals at one o'clock sharp," he said, when Linthicum closed the neatly bound script of "The Parisians." "No questions until then, please."

"I was going to take you people now," said Ledyard to the others. "But something I didn't anticipate has come up, so I must run down to Mr. Mandelbaum's office. Mr. Schanze will teach you the opening chorus while I'm gone."

No one knew he was referring to the libretto as the unanticipated matter except Lottie, and, possibly Hartsell, lounging over by the piano beside the composer, Schanze, who wore a look of blank dismay. Ledyard clapped on his hat, caught up his coat and ran out of the stage entrance to his motor car, where sat already enthroned Miss Carlotta Alleyne.

"What d'you want, Lottie?" he asked in a displeased tone.

"The book was terrible, wasn't it? Oh, don't look at me like that, Mr. Ledyard—you know you're going down to the office to have Nat Morris get to work rewriting it, aren't you? But it won't do any good—there's a clause in the contract preventing it."

As the car tore down Broadway, she outlined the situation briefly.

The car halted before Mandelbaum's office.

"Just a moment, Mr. Ledyard—I want to help you. There's nothing in the contract to prevent Thompson Hartsell from rewriting the book; and he's clever, awfully clever—he can do just what you want. And I ought to know. I've been on your books long enough—worked for you in four productions—to know what you want."

"The lyric writer? He's never written a book; I've no time to waste on inexperienced people," Ledyard began disjointedly. Her calm, matter-of-fact assurance and absolute confidence puzzled him. She saw her advantage, and passed to him the same frayed bits of typewriting carried so long in Hartsell's pocket, those which had already served her once in getting Linthicum to insist on Tommy's collaboration.

"Hartsell wrote those," she said simply.

No one but a brilliantly clever man could have done the fooling that Ledyard was now frowning over; work that represented much midnight electricity burnt for no reason than to amuse some theatrical dinner with hits in rhyme at the foibles and fancies of prominent people of their world; work too local to be understood by more than a few thousands.

"It doesn't say much for him, wasting his time like that," growled Ledyard.

"It proves he can do what's got to be done, doesn't it?" persisted Lottie with a woman's tenacity where the man she loves is concerned. "Listen, Mr. Ledyard: I'll get Mr. Linthicum to go away and stay away until the dress rehearsal. He's wanted in Newport and Bar Harbor, and he isn't wanted here. Meanwhile you get Mr. Hartsell to rewrite the book. Stand over him with a club and

make him do it. Don't tell him it's for his own sake—to make a reputation or money or anything like that; tell him it's for you; as a friend, beg him to help you out. Make him help you shoulder the responsibility; take him home with you and lock him in a room, and don't let him out until he finishes an act. That's the only way, believe me; do that, and we'll have a success."

When she finished, breathless, Ledyard looked at her in silent amazement. As one of his "girls"—at whom he stormed and raved during rehearsals, but for whom he cherished an almost paternal regard, and saw to it that they always had work—he had regarded her as a promising child; he had been glad to see her promoted to a principal's part, a move he had himself recommended, but in the role of Little Miss Fix-It she was as yet a newcomer and had to be understood.

And she *made* him understand, right there on the Broadway curb, with hundreds of people both of them knew passing and repassing unrecognized. And Ledyard, being one of the people of behind the "back drop," found nothing to censure in this use of Linthicum to exalt Hartsell; for the lyric writer and the girl were of his world, while for the self-satisfied amateur Bohemian he had only the contempt in which stage folk hold those who invade the country of rouge paws and pearl powder equipped with ammunition as defective as the script of "The Parisians" had proved to be.

"I'll speak to Mr. Mandelbaum about it," said Ledyard gruffly.

VII

LEDYARD was, at heart, as kindly a soul and as good a companion as lived, his air of sternness and manner of shouting when things went wrong at rehearsal being merely part of his system of discipline, which, on the first day, transformed any chorus he rehearsed into soldiers. For all of that, he permitted no one else, not even the managers for whom he worked, to speak

harshly to his people or even of them. Hartsell had never known him personally until Ledyard asked him to lunch that day. Thereafter, in spite of Tommy's protests, he became as clay in the big fellow's hands; being managed as easily as Ledyard's actors and chorus people, although by a different system.

Lottie had found the flaw in Hartsell's armor. Contemptuous as he was of fame and fortune, he yet would do anything to win the plaudits of those he admired—among whom Ledyard soon figured. Moreover, Ledyard took the right viewpoint regarding the work to be done—that is, Hartsell's viewpoint.

"Of course all this business is utter rot—you know it and I know it. But I've always had a fancy that if some fellow with a real sense of humor instead of a stage sense would pretend to take it seriously, and write a burlesque on men and things as they seem to him, we might have something new and successful. Take Swift for instance; his satire would make a gorgeous background for a musical show—'Gulliver' was just built for comic opera. Burlesque the old situations, giving them a new twist, so that when the public thinks it knows what it's going to get, it doesn't get it at all."

Hartsell became enthusiastic at once; but he did not know Ledyard was referring to work to be done on this particular show. When he discovered it, he flatly refused.

"I'm the lyric writer, Mr. Ledyard," he said.

"But Linthicum's gone away, and we've got to have a show. Here I am sticking only because I've got faith in you pulling us out of this hole; are you going to be a quitter? Going to throw me down—and that company of a hundred people? Haven't you got any heart? Don't throw us down."

Hartsell wavered. Ledyard thrust the script into his hand, hurried him into a motor car and to his apartment; where he locked him in the library with a stenographer, tobacco and refreshments near at hand, an electric

bell and a dumbwaiter. Then he went back to his chorus.

In a spirit of mad resentment at having this work forced upon him, Tommy Hartsell carefully made a list of every scene of physical and "prop" comedy that he had seen wring shouts of laughter from benighted audiences; also every stock line of the "humorists" and the vaudeville comics. Having satisfied himself that he had exhausted the resources of his memory on these subjects, he lighted a cigar and told the expectant stenographer he was ready to begin.

He dictated rapidly, but all the while building a structure out of his fifty-seven "sure fire laughs" and situations; a structure which, while enabling him to use the stuff he despised in slightly different clothes, allowed also fierce fun to be made of it and those who thought it admirable. The stenographer missed his flights of satire, but was so continually amused by the misfortunes of the comedians that she had many times to stop him until she could recover breath lost by laughing at situations that were old when the world was new—primitive physical comedy. Not once, however, did she titter at his Swiftian rapier thrusts at motheaten ideals and idols; which increased Hartsell's bitterness to such an extent that, as he went on, there was less and less of the Juvenal and more and more of the Autocylus predominant. He rang his first act curtain down with a situation that before the slight change he made in it had done duty since Sheridan's time. It rendered the stenographer helpless with mirth.

"I'll bet this show is a great success," she said cordially. "I never laughed so much in my life."

"Give it to Mr. Ledyard when you're through," said Hartsell. It was dusk now, and Ledyard came in answer to his ringing, and let him out when he heard the first act was finished.

"Well?" asked the producer.

The stenographer burst into eulogy.

"That's the kind of thing that counts," said Ledyard, linking his arm in Hartsell's after giving the stenographer instructions to have script and

"parts" typed by the morning. "The little 'steno' there—she's an average sample of the public—if you made *her* laugh you can make them *all* laugh and there's a fortune waiting for you, my boy."

Immediately he was sorry he had said it.

"Sooner than make a fortune that way, by prostituting every mite of talent I have, I'd rather be a bum," said Hartsell hotly.

It was some time before Ledyard could persuade him to go on with the second act. It was written the following day in about the same time and in the same manner, except that as the play progressed the satire entirely disappeared. Just before the final curtain, however, Hartsell introduced the character of a soured dramatic critic, who said of what Hartsell had written just what that sort of a critic was likely to say—certainly no critic could say more.

Even with this Ledyard was delighted.

"It's great," said Ledyard with an air of finality. "It's the surest fire show I ever rehearsed. Now all I ask of you is to stick around at rehearsals, and make little changes here and there for song cues and 'front' scenes as we may require them—"

"All you ask!" Hartsell laughed harshly. "To sit around and listen to that stuff, and have people know I wrote it?"

"But *they* think you're great," said Ledyard. "And you are."

VIII

It is permitted to few of the world to know that in this life of ours there is no real tragedy, except the tragedy of extreme poverty where babies die in the hot summer for want of a nickel's worth of ice; and the tragedy of the maimed, the blind, the disfigured or congenitally weak. Outside of these terribly actual things, all other tragedy is fictitious, largely the result of a lack of introspection or sense of humor. As civilization progresses a realization of this fact becomes general, and the heroes of drama become comic figures, chasing

the limelight. We exchange a "Silver King" with his "My God! Me own child!" for a "Devil's Disciple" who insists that he has a right to commit a bit of melodramatic bravado which threatens him with the rope without having the excuse tagged onto it that he did it for love of the wife of the man he saved; and, not being able to have her—the old dramatists would explain—sacrificed his own life to make her happy with the man she *did* love.

"I *didn't* do it for that reason," exclaims Dick Dudgeon unhappily. "I don't know *why* I did it!" But those in the secret of life know he did it because the human animal likes to be dramatic at night and regret it in the morning.

All this by way of prelude to a little sentimental bosh that Thompson Hartsell played for himself on the night of finishing his version of "The Parisians." All through his reading of the second act to the company he had been interrupted by gales of laughter, even from the comedians, who, as a rule, make it a point to impress on the author that they tickle the public's risibles not because of the *lines he wrote* but because they are *themselves*. Ledyard stood by, glowing, and Lottie smiled a proud, glad smile. She was the first to congratulate him.

"Tommy, it's sensational! It's sure fire; it's great—the funniest show I ever heard. I knew you had it in you."

Tommy snarled.

She became instantly conscious of her error, but it was too late to retrieve. However, she tried.

"Of course this kind of work isn't worthy of you. But it's a stepping stone to bigger things. Now that the managers know you can write, it will give them confidence in you; don't you see?"

"I do see," he returned with deliberate scorn. "I see that I've sunk to doing what I've ridiculed others for. I've written consummate balderdash—utter rot—absolute piffle. I'm no better than a woman of the streets; I'm worse, because the mind is more sacred than the body. I've lost my self-

respect. And that's what you call 'great'!"

He turned toward the stage door. But he was not allowed to escape so easily. The stars of the show had been waiting impatiently to congratulate him also; and Mandelbaum, the manager, who had been listening to the reading from the dark auditorium, took charge of him afterward, led him to his club and told him a contract for the book and lyrics of his next musical production would be waiting for him in his (Mandelbaum's) office on the morrow along with any reasonable amount of advance royalty he might desire.

"I don't know why you've been holding out on us so long," said the manager genially. "I've been looking for a man like you since I first started in business."

A success! Hartsell thought of this bitterly as he turned into an obscure café on a side street. He wanted to get drunk and forget his shame. It was late; Mandelbaum had insisted on dinner in a Fifth Avenue restaurant, and on much champagne; so that Hartsell was in that state of sentimental melancholy wherein men do foolish things. He wanted to drink himself into forgetfulness among strangers; hence he had wandered far from Curate's and similar rendezvous of the people of his kind. A failure, with the consciousness of great things within him, undone only because of a sick world, he had shone in such places, the undisputed king of the table, pouring out wit and satire for the appreciative. These expected from him some day a play or a book that would startle the world by almost supernatural cleverness, style, philosophy and wisdom. That he had not written it was only because he scorned to throw pearls before swine. His lyric writing was a mere means of livelihood; they did not hold that against him, knowing he must eat; but to come before them with this sorry musical play—he, of all men!

Worst of all, in his heart of hearts, almost subconsciously, for he would not permit his brain to acknowledge the thought, he knew that the praise of "inferior people"—the performers and the manager for whom "The Parisian"

was rewritten—was welcome to him, gratifying, actually warming. The horrible suspicion persisted in forcing itself upon him that if his first work had been popular it might never have occurred to him that he was a superior person; doubtless he would have gone on trying to please the public and considering he had failed each time he did not, instead of taking as a criterion the ukase of those out of sympathy with the public's taste.

Strive to banish it as he would, another thought obtruded: that it would afford him pleasure to see thousands of mere people in ecstasies over his work, applauding violently and insisting on seeing him before the curtain. There would be good things result, too: a house in the country, a motor car, trips to Europe, a mind unworried by the need of petty cash. He could surround himself with beautiful things the better to be inspired. Then he laughed harshly again. To be inspired to what? To doing more twaddle of this sort? He needed nothing but a stenographer for that; the clangor of the city did not retard such puerile thought.

"But," something argued, "you can do one or two things like that, make money, and then settle down to do your real work." But he knew this was sophistry; that, once known and popular as the author of a certain sort of thing, one's thoughts and ambitions changed. One craved popularity as a true artist craves the praise of his peers. One needed luxury as a true artist needs the consciousness of good work well done.

He struck the table, attracting the attention of others in the room in which he sat, muttered an order to a waiter, and then told himself fiercely that he would be no such hack. Let Linthicum's name remain as author of the "book." He, Hartsell, would get an advance of royalty from Mandelbaum, refuse his other contract, and, away in London or Paris, live on what this piece would bring him and work steadily on the novel which, started a year before, still needed the devotion of as much time again before the critics of the *Athenaeum* and the French reviews would hail him as a master of realistic prose.

And what then? Some few thousand copies would be circulated among the elect in letters; some praise would be received from great writers whom he worshiped, and he would be back at lyric writing again to make a living, pointed out by the theatrical world, his own world, as a man who "wrote one good show but didn't have it in him to follow it up." Poverty-stricken again while the mud from the wheels of popular writers' motor cars splashed his ready made clothes, and, as he was today, the guest of luckier men whenever he ate in a decent restaurant. Worst of all—unknown except to a few scholars and critics until perhaps some fifty years hence when he would be "classic," if he had the courage to go on writing great books in poverty. Was it worth while?

IX

THE room in which he sat was long and low; and vines, flowers, grapes and apples covered its walls and ceilings, concealing the sources of light; an imitation of a Roman garden, tawdry enough when done on a larger scale downtown, in this place absolutely distasteful to such as Hartsell in a normal frame of mind. Women sat singly and in couples at the little tables and welcomed masculine advances with seemingly perpetual smiles.

One of them paused on her entrance from the street at Hartsell's table, and, as he was too preoccupied to warn her off with a frown, she sat down. One of the waiters hurried to ascertain her pleasure. Hartsell made a bored motion with his hand, meaning, if such were the custom of the place, she might order as she liked, and told the man to bring him more whiskey.

"I'll have whiskey, too," said the girl.

The waiter eyed her, surprised. It is not the custom for girls who live by their wits, notwithstanding all the false reputation for revelry they have, to take anything stronger than water colored to represent crème-de-menthe and other drinks that can be sold at a quarter, one half of the price reverting to the girl in such places as this, and represented by

a small brass check which the waiter hands them surreptitiously.

But the girl repeated her order sharply. On his way to the bar the waiter informed the proprietor that "Sophie's got the blues again; she's ordering red-eye."

"Make it half cold tea, then; she gets nasty right after her crying spells," directed the proprietor. "I suppose Joe's fell fer that crap game again and swung one on her from his heel."

In places of this type—the first cabarets in America and dubbed "honkatons"—the waiters undertake also the duties of entertainers. They sing two types of songs: the first of the "twirling" type which says something about a "bear," or a "tuneful harmo-nee"; the second a species of sentimental ballad. One of the latter, full of tonsorial minors, began after Hartsell's unwelcome companion had swallowed her drink. Immediately the tears stood out in her eyes.

"I guess you despise me, don't you?" she began fiercely to the astonished writer. "But let me tell you if we was down in my home town you'd be glad—yes, and proud—to be seen sitting with me. You betcha you would."

"Look here," said Hartsell, amused out of his melancholy; "you're not going to pull that old one about if you weren't in this life half of Fifth Avenue would be calling on you?"

"Yes, and they would, too," she replied, dabbing at her eyes with an ornate but soiled handkerchief.

"What doing—leaving their laundry?" asked Hartsell, laughing.

"You cur! You pup! You—" (She went further in embellishment of this character.) "If you knew who I was you wouldn't talk thata way! Why, if I was to tell you my real name! If my mother knew I was in a place like this—my mother!"

She buried her face in her hands. The sentimental song ceased. Another singer began one of a different variety:

"Baby, look-ahere, look-ahere, look-ahere."

Immediately the girl looked up and snapped her fingers.

"What is it, dear? What is it, dear?" she chanted.

She forgot Hartsell for the hired dancer of the place, with whom she was soon swaying in the intricacies of the "Texas Tommy."

Hartsell paid his check. Outside it was a night of stars. He looked up at them, took a long breath, shook his head in wistful astonishment.

"I laughed at her; and I was doing the same sort of thing myself," he murmured. "Just the same sort of thing. There she was, self-proclaimed lady, regretting a life for which she was eminently suited. If she hadn't embraced it, she'd probably be making beds and sweeping floors. Here I am, self-proclaimed genius, regretting the first work I have ever done well enough to get any real pay for; whereas, if I hadn't done it, I probably would be writing hack lyrics all my life. The girl has by imagination and distance transformed the lower middle class home she came from into the house of a leading citizen; I have kidded myself into believing I am an embryo Balzac or De Maupassant. Our cases are precisely similar—neither she nor I can prove it; if her pathos over her 'wasted life' is bathos, so is mine; and as I laughed at her so must I laugh at myself."

And he did.

Often, in later years, he would tell people how that girl had "made" him. "I hunted her up afterward, gave her money and sent her to her 'mother old and gray.' A week or so later, she was back on Broadway. In a burst of confidence she told me her mother had eloped with the iceman, 'who was no gentleman and did not know how to treat a lady'—meaning herself—so she came back where she was appreciated."

X

You can distinguish the Hartsell home on Riverside Drive without any trouble; there is a lawn and a garden—both unique in a location where land is sold by the ounce—and the house itself is like a Florentine villa. Inside

it is a treasure house of paintings, bronzes and old china. Each room is faithful to some particular period except one where Hartsell dictates or pounds the typewriter. On its walls are framed playbills of the sixty-two musical shows he has written, and some few "dodgers" or "heralds"—little square pieces of pasteboard used for ashcan, battue and débris advertising, and one or two "eight-sheets," lithograph parodies of the face of Carlotta Alleyne, "musical comedy's favorite star," or, as booking managers describe her, "the sure fire box office attraction."

Perhaps it was neither chivalrous nor womanly for Lottie Allen to have told Tommy Hartsell that it was she who had plotted to make him successful, and that he owed everything to her: first, for teaching him to find himself; second, for directing the managers' minds toward the same search. He had asked her, in a tired way, why.

"Because I love you, Tommy," she said simply. "I wanted you to succeed because I knew I was going to succeed myself, and I didn't want you to be known simply as the husband of a famous actress."

"The husband!" he had ejaculated, petrified.

"You know you like me as well as you like anybody," she returned. "And you've got to marry some time. And since I've done everything for you—"

She had begun to cry softly.

"Oh, don't do that," said Hartsell irritably.

"Now you're successful, you'll never know whether other girls are after you to help them on in the business, or because you've got money now and can give them things; while I—you know I love you. And—what do you want in a woman that I haven't got? Everybody says I'm pretty, and I've made a hit, and I'll learn whatever you want me to, and be a good 'pal' and—"

"I give in," said Hartsell, laughing. "I guess you're a pretty good bet, Lottie. Come here, poor little thing, and nestle under the wing."

He raised his arm so she could put her head under it.

"Well," he had said in gentle raillery, looking down at the pretty, tearful face—"well, poor little thing, did it want her Tommy as much as all that?"

She had responded with a satisfied sound, which, if she were not so feminine and attractive, we would call a little grunt, and he kissed her; whereupon she made believe to purr like a pleased kitten.

As for Linthicum—Charles Lester Linthicum, the amateur Bohemian—you may read how he tragically discovered her love for another man; how he pleaded that he would "make her care for him in spite of all"; how a well groomed, manly man very much like his "clean cut, strong and silent" heroes, was reduced to a pitiful, sobbing and—worst of all—disheveled and womanly bundle of nerves; while the "Vampire" sat by, cold and unmoved, even a little bored, and, while patting her hair preparatory to going out as soon as she was rid of him, actually hummed a little tune (from "The Parisians")—you may read, we repeat, all of these things in "The Vampire Woman," conceded by all the shop and school girls, young ladies of the "uptown (meaning Harlem and the

Bronx) younger set" and real débutantes (downtown if we *must* say it) to be his ablest and most thrilling novel, and which has been handed by many a mother to her son that he may see how heartless, soulless and utterly worthless the stage makes a woman.

To Linthicum, then, a soul eating, blood sucking vampire; to Hartsell a "poor little thing which is to come and nestle under the wing," a sort of "well done, thou good and faithful mental inferior, but otherwise more or less attractive young person." It is simply the difference between the dramatic viewpoint and the human one.

However, "The Vampire Woman" has already sold more than any other American novel; and on the strength of his increased income, Linthicum has been able to afford marriage with a gentle, well bred but dowerless girl from Philadelphia, who thinks he is quite the most wonderful thing in the world, and who would endure the pain of holding a red hot poker sooner than cry out and disturb him while he is at work on one of those literary masterpieces of his, the construction of which necessitates absolute silence.



REGRETS

By H. E. Zimmerman

HE published a volume of fugitive verse—
It might have been better—it might have been worse—
And all of the critics whose verdict he sought
Expressed their regret that the verse had been caught.



A ROLLING stone gathers no moss, but it may acquire considerable polish and many a gracious curve.



POPULARITY—The afterbirth of a platitude.

A TRAGEDY OF ERRORS

By Helen Davies

IT was hot, high noon. Through the open kitchen door, the sun streamed over the yellow-painted floor and braided, gay rag rug, upon which the house cat purred contentedly. The dresser was resplendent with its pewter, and sheen of the blue willow ware. The wide-flung windows revealed fields green to harvest, distant laden fruit trees; while close to the house were borders of homely flowers and roses, above which hovered humming bees, returning to and from the hives. A thrush, in ecstatic frenzy, winged through the blue; his piercing, triumph song fell back to earth like drops of gold. A woman paused to listen; then her voice, too, arose—as she gathered a handful of flowers to adorn the meal which stood invitingly upon the table: butter, fresh from the churn; newly baked bread; hot gingerbread; ham and eggs, crisp from the pan. She experienced the joy of achieved creation, as she brushed back a stray curly lock of hair from her flushed face, glancing out of the door to see if her husband were in sight. She was young, fresh, good to look upon in sweet wholesomeness—widely different in type from the man. He was wiry—bearing signs of incessant struggle with nature's warring forces, until sun and storm and wind had beaten him into something hard and grim. Without a word of greeting, he took his seat and began his meal.

The woman silently ministered to his needs; but for her the beauty had died from the day. A cloud passed over the sun. A chill wind blew from the east, and the bird's song expired in a piercing note. When she rose, her companion kept his place; evidently thinking deeply, as his hands clasped and unclasped nervously,

the veins swelled on his forehead, his mouth worked convulsively. He bit his lips, and suddenly cried, in a hoarse voice: "Lois, Lois, I can't bear it—I can't bear it!"

The woman came quickly toward him, speaking as gently as to an ailing child: "What is it, dear? You know I love you."

"Know it?" he said roughly. "I do not know it! That's what's maddenin' me! I've watched, and seen that pale-faced Andrew White sneakin' about, hidin' behind your petticoats when you come out of meetin'. Bringin' presents: apples—as though we'd none; messages from your aunt, who's well able to bring her own."

"Pshaw! I'm sick of it all. I might have known I couldn't long content ye, for we're different—you've had eddication—read hard books that I can't even say the names of—taught school and"—with a despairing gesture—"all I've known, I've larnt diggin', plowin', plantin', reapin'—same as father before me. Oncet I heard a lecture on 'Hidden Force'; 'twas a lot of scientific names I couldn't get holt on, but one fact gripped hard: that if ye could only dig down deep enough in the earth, ye'd find leapin', livin' flame. I often think on that. The ground what seems so solid under your feet is seethin', movin', never at rest for all it looks so calm."

"Well, I've come to see I'm like that"—striking his chest with his clenched fist—"slow, dumb to look at! But underneath there's somewhat strugglin' to get out—to kill, maybe." He swallowed convulsively, adding hopelessly, dejectedly: "I was a fool to think I could satisfy ye. While I've been workin' I've

been thinkin'. Nights, too, lyin' by your side, I've been wonderin' whether you was only light-hearted. Seems as though you couldn't be sleepin', lookin' as innocent as a child, if you was—" He choked back a word, adding hopelessly: "But mother was like that: laughin', jokin', while father sat by the fire quietlike, peerin' out of his little eyes like red hot coals under his bushy brows—never sayin' a word, but lookin', watchin', till he *knew*!"

Lois's head reeled. The kitchen floor swayed beneath her feet; she knew the sick revulsion of leaning on what had seemed firm, only to find a yawning void opening before her. Was there nothing solid in the entire scheme of life—nothing upon which one could lean and feel secure? Did love mean only suspicion—jealousy, hateful watchfulness? Instinctively she grasped the meanest, most despicable of weapons, yet the only one her frail woman's hands could yield: the physical attraction of her sex. She threw her arms about her husband.

"I love you, Silas!" she cried. "I married you in spite of opposition and warnings. I am true—you really believe it, too! For God's sake, think what you are doing! Don't wreck our lives! Don't!"

The man pushed her from him so roughly that she staggered. "None of that!" he cried. "I'm in no mood for that, for I know what that's worth. Women's tricks to deceive—to throw a man off the track by makin' him think he's the only one." He nodded wisely. "I know what I'm talkin' about, for—listen!" He snatched her wrists, forcing her to stand directly in front of him. "Last night, when the house was very still, the old clock just struck twelve. I sat thinkin' the same thoughts over and over again; wonderin' if ye could be true, like ye look, or if ye were playin', pretendin' a part. Then, suddenlike, I heard a rustle, a faint noise. I looked up, thinkin' ye might have stolen on me unawares. But"—he chuckled, and his voice rang with suppressed exultation—"as plain as I see you, I saw father settin' by my side rockin' like he used to do, slow and slow,

warmin' his hands—for he allers was chilly. I didn't speak for all he looked nacheral: just wearin' the same old clothes I allers seem to remember—none of those floatin' things like angels have in picters.

"As he turned his head, I caught the smell of damp, fresh-turned earth. Fixin' his piercing little eyes on me, he says: 'Same wimmin's tricks still goin' on. They're all alike; I know—I know.' He sat noddin' his head a while, then chuckled a bit, and says low and quietlike: 'Folks thought it was queer when Amos Green was found lyin' with his neck broke and his white face turned up to the stars, and the dew fallin' on it. 'Twas thought he missed his footin' and fell out of the haymow, but—I was a strong man in those days, and your mother a bit giddy—like all young things—but she larnt her lesson!'"

Lois shook from head to foot. Her face grew very white. "For God's sake, Silas, you can't know what you're sayin'. Your father died ten years ago; don't you remember that we put his chair away in the attic when we were married?"

"I fetched it back again!" cried Silas triumphantly. "I had a kind of feelin' that father would come lookin' for it in its old place by the fire. 'Twould seem as though he was forgot, shoved aside. Don't ye touch it, girl. Just shake up the patchwork cushions a bit, so he'll allers find it ready."

Lois shivered.

Silas continued, meditatively: "I have decided what I'll do. We'll live here together, for if I should let you go, Andrew White—or maybe someone else—might take a fancy to ye. I couldn't stand that—I couldn't! But I'm done with quarrelin' and arguin'. We've had a lot of talk durin' the short while we've lived as man and wife; I've got to have quiet, for my head turns round and round like 'twas spinnin'. Hush, don't speak! Listen, woman, listen! Remember what St. Paul says: that they keep quiet and bide at home! We will live right on here, like brother and sister—and our wedded life ends now. I'll never speak to you again. This side

the grave you'll never hear my voice, but, like father, I shall set and watch and listen."

"You cannot be so wicked!" cried Lois desperately. "You may not speak to me, but I shall to you. 'Wedded life over'! Silas, you cannot, dare not break the promise which you made before the minister; you couldn't live without my love! You—"

He interrupted her. "Hush, woman—peace." And before his authoritative, rebuking voice, hers faltered into silence, and she sank down awed by a power against which she could not war.

As day followed day, and Silas's determination remained unfaltering, she raised her protest, at first coaxingly, then vociferously, studying womanly wiles to tempt him from his vow; at length, at realization of her helplessness, sinking into apathetic acquiescence, from which one morning she aroused, at hearing the sharp click of the gate. Impulsively throwing down her household task, she ran to meet the stout, florid, grayhaired woman who came briskly along the narrow path between flowering bushes of snowballs and the masses of crimson ramblers on the trellis.

"It beats all, Lois," declared the newcomer cheerfully, "how your plants do flourish. Seems like you must love them. Folks say they need it like other young things. Lor'! I don't have time to cultivate posies. I am most too busy feedin' the hungry and washin' dishes, to do aught else. Maybe that will be counted to me for righteousness, for it ain't easy to get my old knees to do prayin'."

Laughing constantly, she kissed her niece warmly, and, holding her off at arm's length, gazed earnestly into her face.

"You look peaked," she announced oracularly. "Well, I've come to set a while. Will and Ned went to Dusenberry to the cattle show. They'll stop for me on their way back."

She produced her knitting and seated herself, adjusting the patchwork cushion to the needs of her rotund person with a vigorous thump.

"Where's Silas?" she demanded, look-

ing over her spectacles as though suspicious that he might spring out unawares from the cupboard or from behind the door.

"He, too, has gone to Dusenberry," replied Lois, nervously.

Silence fell between the women, broken only by the sound of escaping steam from the bubbling kettle, and the loud, contented rumbling of the cat, which, with arching back and fluffy tail, rubbed herself against Lois's knee.

Aunt Priscilla's steel needles clicked busily, flashing in the sun as they wove in and out of the coarse blue yarn sock. Suddenly she rolled up her work, stabbing it with the needle. "Like to do that to some folks I know!" adding quickly: "I'm not goin' to beat round the bush. I'm all the mother you've ever known; I've loved you like you were my own; I've earned the right to speak when I see things goin' wrong. I warned you—and I never did like Balcom stock—I never shall."

Lois made no response, but a flush arose to her cheeks and she breathed quickly, pressing her hands tight together.

"Is it true," demanded Aunt Priscilla peremptorily, "what folks say: that Silas has lived six months right here, alongside of ye, without speakin' a word to the wife he swore to love and cherish?"

Lois trembled, then burst into tears. "It is true," she sobbed. "Silas was jealous of Andrew White, whom I've known ever since I was a child at school. It is his nature, aunt; he is like his father, and he suffers—he suffers."

"When we were first married, and he had had one of his brooding spells, one night when I was in bed and asleep he caught me roughly by the shoulder, shouting in a hoarse, strange voice: 'Up, Lois, up! Ye believe in prayer; pray that the Lord will cast the dumb devil out of me!' Then he turned away, groaning: 'Lie still; 'twould be no use—miracles don't happen now.' I sprang up, trying to throw my arms around him, as I cried: 'Listen, listen! Love works miracles!' He took no notice of what I said, but, muttering to himself, left the room."

Aunt Priscilla stared, incredulous. "Such goin's on ain't nacheral," she deliberated. "The Lord expects folks to eat their meals and sleep at night, so as to be ready for a good day's work—not to go prowlin' round, lookin' for miracles which ain't to be expected, bein' out of the or'nary." Pausing, glancing over her shoulder, she hitched her chair nearer the cheerful blaze, lowering her voice to a confidential pitch. "This is a queer house and has seen queer actions in its time. Years gone by, there was all kinds of stories floatin' round, when Silas's mother's cousin was found lyin' dead, with his neck broke, just by the barn. 'Twas said he had been pitchin' hay in the loft and must have lost his footin' and slipped through the open window right down on the pavin' stones.

"I hate to think on it. 'Twas awful! The commotion it made when he was found next day! Silas's mother gave one fearful screech, and fell down in a faint. She was light-headed with fever for days, and when she got off her bed, she had changed from a gay, light-hearted girl to a bent old woman with whitened hair. I used to see her settin' in meetin' right side of Silas's pa; never seemin' as though she heerd a word of prayer or sermon, with an awful frightened look on her poor thin face; and he settin' stiff as a poker, with strong, knotted hands restin' on his stick, and his keen little eyes under his bushy brows, peerin' first one side and then another, like he's lookin' to see if folks was whisperin'. Well, they did! But couldn't prove nothin'. So talk died out, as it will if it ain't got nothin' to feed on. Did Silas ever speak on them times?"

"He told me about the accident," said Lois, shuddering. "I can't bear to think of it. How cruel life is; how she must have suffered! Sometimes I feel as though I couldn't love Silas too much to make up for his gloomy, loveless childhood in this strange home. Yet—it is hard—it is so lonely at night, when I lie listening to the mice scrambling behind the wainscoting. I can hear the shutters creak, the wind whistling through the trees, a branch tapping at the pane. So lonely in the morning when I come

down, with never a word of greeting, until I have learned to be grateful for even the birds' songs and the purring of the cat." She spoke nervously and sobbed uncontrollably.

"If you won't leave him," said Aunt Priscilla, oracularly, "wait; he'll come to need you so that you'll hold him in the hollow of your hand. Men are only big children, after all. They need pettin' and cossetin'. Then there's your chance. Keep refusing. Grow hard! Don't yield till he's so hungry for you that he'll promise anything to get what he's hankerin' for."

"He made me move all his clothes into the little room across the hall," said Lois simply.

Aunt Priscilla snorted contemptuously. "He won't be the first man, nor the last, neither, to find he can't live without a woman. Wait—you'll see. I've lived more nor fifty years on a farm," she continued reminiscently. "I've larnt just one fact: like produces like. You can try graftin' or breedin' if you're set on alterin' species, same as you can try, by love or religion, to alter folks. You can change the outside a bit, but down underneath lies what is unalterable by law—and you've got to reckon on that in *man or apple*." She added irrelevantly: "I never liked Balcom stock—I never shall!"

Lois sat meditatively; suddenly looking up, she said, slowly: "Aunt Priscilla, do you believe in dreams?"

"I dunno," was the meditative retort. "In Bible days they thought a lot on them—larnt by them—heerd angels talkin' on them. There's many things we can't explain. I never have dreams, but I should think you would have—sleepin' alone in this house."

"I had a strange one last night," said Lois quietly. "I was out there in the garden, walking among the roses; they had grown wonderfully tall, and woven their branches so closely that it was hard to force my way through them, for I was carrying a little sleeping child. The buds and perfect flowers came nearer; stooping, pressing, peering at the burden in my arms, which suddenly became so heavy that I relaxed my

grasp and it rolled from me and instantly was hidden by the falling roses. Thick and fast they fell—a perfect shower of roses—buds and perfect flowers; yellow, pink and red and white; tantalizing, confusing, as I tossed them first this way and now that, in frantic, hopeless efforts to find the child which was buried from my sight.”

“Lor’ sakes, Lois,” exclaimed her aunt, “it sounds like poetry, what you larnt at school; you give me the creeps. Stop dreamin’ and come home with me. Reckon there’s nothin’ will bring a man to his senses like havin’ to cook his own meals and clean up a bit.”

“I could not leave him, Aunt Priscilla!” exclaimed Lois vehemently. “I love him! I married him because I pitied his loneliness. I couldn’t desert him.”

“You allers were the greatest girl for motherin’ sick kittens and unfledged birds. I suppose nothin’ I can say will bring you to your senses.”

There was a pause. Then Lois said slowly, glancing over her shoulder and lowering her voice: “Aunt Priscilla, do you believe that the dead ever return to where they once lived?”

“What’s been puttin’ such notions in your head?” questioned the older woman. “I never heard tell of but one man who came back, and he was Lazarus. I allers did want to know how his sisters took it. Maybe they’d got used to doing without him; maybe he brought back onconvenient notions of how things was done in another country; but Scripture is silent on them interestin’ points.”

“Silas thinks his father comes back,” said Lois timidly. “The idea has made me so nervous that sometimes I actually fancy that I really hear the tapping of his stick as he creeps through the passage and fumbles at the latch. I should go wild with fear if I once saw his grizzled head and bushy eyebrows and knotted hands. I hope I never shall! I hope I never shall!”

“Shucks!” said Aunt Priscilla decisively. “You’re too much alone. I wish I could give Silas a piece of my mind. But talkin’ will never alter folks.

But there’s Ned and Will turnin’ into the far gate.”

The entire village of Dusenberry went almost frantic in its effort to solve the mystery which enveloped the lives of Lois and Silas. What was it? *Why* was it, that they lived on, side by side, wrapt in speechless, baffling misery?

Aunt Priscilla openly proclaimed, far and near, that she had no sympathy with such actions. She secretly conveyed the old minister to the house, hoping he would add his influence to her own to induce Lois to leave her husband. Audibly muttering that his notions were antiquated, as, taking the girl’s hand in his trembling, withered one, he quavered: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord.”

One evening Lois sat watching Silas read his paper, until she felt that she must scream, jump up and upset the lamp—to break the tension of that awful silence. Her sewing fell upon her lap; she glanced timidly to that far corner of the room where the chair stood which Silas’s father had been wont to occupy. She always made a wide circuit to avoid brushing against it, and had noticed that the house cat would never jump into its comfortable recesses, even if every other soft seat was filled. Tonight the chair certainly creaked, and to her excited imagination it certainly swayed back and forth as though under pressure. She held her breath, averting her fascinated eyes. She dared not look, yet, somehow, felt compelled to decide if there were only shadows there, or really the dim outline of a bowed old man, with gnarled hands resting on a stick.

“Silas!” she cried aloud. Then, as he did not answer, did not even seem to hear, she sprang to her feet, ran out of the room, through the kitchen, down the path, out into the orchard, which the moon had transformed into fairyland. She held her breath at the absolute witchery of the scene. Any wondrous event might happen now. The stage was set: the trunks of the trees gleamed like silver; the blossoms shone with spectral white; the stars swung low their brilliant lanterns, and one, grown

bold, hurled himself through the tender blue and shot to earth. A night moth winged against her face as she stumbled on across the uneven grass; until, reaching the low stone wall, she leaned her arms on it and burst into tears.

How little she had asked of life: an opportunity to bestow the love which welled up in her heart; a little laughter in the sunshine; a merry word to lighten the burden of the day; the sound of a prattling child; a thrill of boyish merriment; her own voice raised in a cradle song! But she had only silence—intense, intolerable silence weighing on her with an almost intolerable pressure; benumbing, paralyzing, until it seemed as though she could not breathe under its crushing weight.

A step came swiftly toward her. A wild hope filled her heart. Perhaps it might be Silas; regretful, repentant, ready to implore forgiveness. Tender words fluttered on her lips. He had no need to sue for pardon; love forgives at the first far-off, feeble need of him who has offended—nay, even runs to meet the sinner when he turns toward home. But, as she raised her head, she saw that it was Andrew White who stood before her.

"*You* here?" she breathed, rather than spoke.

"Yes," he answered boldly. "I watched through the window and saw you sitting by that brute. I followed you and heard your sobs." Pausing, he added quickly: "Come, Lois, come! Leave him. Don't wreck your life by living with a madman! Surely you must see that he does not love you, or he could not treat you as he does. You know that I have always loved you, ever since you wore pink and white striped pinafores, and we sat on the same bench at school. I never did believe in hankering after other men's wives, and if you were happy, I'd never speak; but to sit by and see you tortured is more than I can endure. God's curses on that brute!"

"Hush!" cried Lois. "Hush! You must not come here. I am afraid for you. 'Tis a lonesome place, and Silas—I do not know—" She shivered and in-

voluntarily clung to his arm. "Hush! What was that? I heard a rustling behind those bushes yonder—and did you see that startled rabbit leap across the grass? Oh, go, and leave me to my fate!"

"I am not afraid," replied the man resolutely, "though I have heard strange stories whispered of what once happened in this place." Then, resolutely, he drew the woman to his breast. "Come, dear, come."

But Lois flung herself away from his contact. "But I have never loved you!" she cried. "I love my husband. You must not stay. Believe me when I say that I shall never leave him. He is so helpless—like a child astray."

Time slipped by, adding day to day, week to week and month to month. While the silence within the house remained unbroken, and, intensifying it, the very birds which Lois had daily fed with crumbs, to encourage their songs, reared their broods and took their flight. Then winter gripped and stilled the brook's noisy throat, and from the leaden, hopeless sky the snow fell like the plumage of some gigantic bird, then, more rapidly, in great blinding sheets of snow, which, drifting, heaping, deadened sound until the whole world lay under the spell of quiet.

Lois turned to her books for comfort. Her Shakespeares, Hemans and Whittier, gained as school prizes, became her dearest friends. She memorized whole pages of their contents, repeating them aloud to get the sound of a voice, in that quiet house. The broom made a cheerful accompaniment to "Snowbound." "To be or not to be" often echoed to the swish of washing dishes, and Desdemona's prayer often arose on the twilight hours, when she waited for the boiling of the tardy kettle.

The hours of day were rendered endurable by the monotonous routine of never accomplished toil, but she learned to dread the long, dark hours when she would be roused to consciousness by the squeak of unseen, tiny combatants behind the walls of the old house, the explosive snap of a piece of furniture, the heavy fall of accumulated snow from the

roof pitch, or by a furious blast of wind flinging a shower of frozen hail against her window. Then she would cower deeper beneath the blankets, clenching teeth and hands in agonizing efforts that no sound should betray her mental and physical anguish to her husband, separated from her by only the width of the narrow passageway.

One night, awakening thus, she fancied that she heard a board creak more strenuously than ever before. Surely someone was moving stealthily. Starting up in bed, she peered into the darkness, straining every sense to hear if the latch of Silas's door really rustled as though pressed by a cautious hand, or if she only imagined it. Perspiration bathed her face; her hands and feet were icy cold; her heart beat suffocatingly. It was true: careful steps were drawing near. They crossed the passage, lingered at the door, drew nearer yet. Then actualities were all confused. Forgotten were all Aunt Priscilla's warnings; forgotten her own cold calculations as to what she would concede and what withhold until her pardon had been sought and won. She only knew her need and his as in the darkness trembling lips were pressed to hers.

When she awakened, and crept shyly down to her accustomed tasks, to find the conditions of her life unchanged, she dared not question either her husband or herself as to the reality of that most wondrous dream. Night after night she tossed and turned in feverish restlessness, dreading, hoping; but she never heard again that cautious footstep, never knew again that rapturous joy. So, gradually, the incident was lost in drab monotony.

Again Earth stirred and woke from her long sleep. The brook shivered the fetters which had held it captive, and rushed, shouting, in the sunshine. Deep down in the silence, a mighty impulse shook the imprisoned dead and green things boldly struggled toward the light. Lois, too, knew the pulsing of hidden life beneath her heart, and caught her breath in wonderment. For her, too, the miracle of generation had been wrought.

"Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." She fitted an idle little tune to the words and sang them over and over again. "Joy cometh!" It had come—an actual, tangible possession, for she meant to call her baby by that sweet old word.

When the first snow flakes drifted, Lois roused from a troubled agony of pain, to find Aunt Priscilla's kindly face bending over her, and a warm, fragrant flannel bundle lying within her arms.

"Has Silas seen the baby yet?" she questioned feebly.

"No, not him!" was the impatient response. "I believe that man's got no more feelin' than a log of wood."

But, late that night, Lois woke from a troubled sleep to find him kneeling by the cradle, peering into the tiny face half hidden there, as he murmured: "Is he *mine*? Is he *mine*? I'll ask father; he will know." Lois flung a protecting arm across the child. "Not *yours*—but *mine*!" she cried wildly. "*Mine, all mine!*" Given in answer to my agonizing prayers for comfort!"

Silas did not answer, but softly stole away and, in the daytime, never even seemed to see the child as he went to and fro bringing wood and water and household necessities; writing brief messages on the slate hung on the kitchen wall where Lois, in turn, wrote what she required for the house.

Then, suddenly, Lois woke from her contentment and patient acquiescence in her lot to find the time of roses had stolen on her unawares. Again the white ones framed upon the trellis; again the crimson ramblers swung their perfumed censers; again the spicy yellow clusters brought a whisper of the East; again the sweetbriars wove their tangled thorn and loveliness.

The roses! Lois gazed at them, dimly discerning disaster. They foretold sorrow. *Why?* Then, quickened by their fragrance, from some remote brain cell leaped the memory of that night when the dream child had been lost beneath the roses. She caught and pressed her baby in her arms. Was it only a trick of overwrought brain and excited imagination, which found him fever-flushed and

languid in the heat of that breathless day in June? During its slowly passing hours, she hung over the little cradle, for once forgetful of the unaccustomed disorder of her home. What could she do to ease the tiny sufferer? Aunt Priscilla was on a visit to distant relatives; Silas, from early dawn, had been working in the far pasture, from which she could not summon him—and, indeed, she never thought of doing so. He had no share in her child. Hers—it was all hers. Bone of her bone, life of her life. Distraught, she pressed the child against a breast which throbbed in agony as the fevered lips refused to give it solace. Again and again she urged the child; again and again it refused—rejecting what had been its greatest joy, until, after a convulsive struggle, suddenly stiffening its limbs; it lay strangely quiet on her knee.

Lois sprang to her feet. The dead child rolled upon the floor. She was beyond heeding the pathetic appeal of the little body so ardently desired, so tenderly nursed. The necessity for action was upon her. An uncontrollable impulse laid hold upon her. The narrow walls of the house hemmed her in, until she could not breathe within their limits. Out—she must get out!

Rushing from the room, down the stairs, she leaped like a mad woman, and rushed into the garden. Gasping, she stood motionless, dazzled by the sunshine, mocked by the roses as they bowed to her, turning now this way and now that, as a soft breeze swayed them; balancing lightly on their stalks as, whispering, blushing, glowing, they told the story of their lives and loves. Looking at them, again the memory of her dream swept over her distraught mind and, in a flash, she knew the roses now must fall—to weave a covering for the child.

Mechanically, she plucked a cluster;

then another, and a third. They resisted. Ah—they did not want to die! Maddened by their fancied opposition to her will, she stripped a bush; then turned toward another, regardless of the thorns which tore her hands. Another, yet another, found her desire unfulfilled, until the roses lay about her feet.

Way off in the west, the sun, too, lay a-dying in such mortal agony that his struggles rent the clouds; staining them crimson with his life's blood; tinting grass and trees with red; flaring upon the windows of the house as though a fire leaped within its walls. Down the path came Silas, carrying his scythe upon his shoulder; and the glow of the sky reached and illumined him until his hands and clothes seemed steeped in the blood red glow.

Lois stood, flushed, disheveled; rose petals clinging to hair and dress. In the swiftness of a kaleidoscope, the scenes of her life shifted before her. The rapturous home-coming; the drifting apart of alien temperaments; the moment when, in the darkness, trembling lips had sought and found her own; then, when her desire had clothed itself in human flesh and, smiling, lay within her arms—and now, when with bleeding heart and hands, she bent—a lonely mother crowned with sorrow's sharpest thorn.

Silas drew nearer, and a merry light crept into his eyes when he saw his wife. He looked younger, walking alertly, as though bringing pleasant tidings, and his voice rang as clear as a boy's as he shouted:

"Lois, did ye know the kitchen door's wide open? I saw father was settin' there by the fire. When he heard my step, he turned his head and called out quite loud and cheerful: 'Silas, my boy, you ought to tell your wife that Andrew White is lying with his throat cut, under the ellow tree in the far pasture!'"



PARKE—I didn't see you the other day at my wife's afternoon tea.

LANE—I never attend those affairs.

"Neither do I."

LOULOU COLLABORATES

By Jay Hardy

IT was about ten o'clock when Loulou entered the Café d'Harcourt.

She came alone, Loulou not exactly knowing why herself. One must do something at the beginning of the evening.

At the center table the same frowzy students were playing the same old game with the same greasy old pack of cards that had done duty only heaven and the proprietor knew how long. Three of them wore beards badly in need of cutting, and the fourth was paid for his extra care in presenting a countenance *rasée* to the world by looking very much in need of a shave. He was a Russian, who was by way of imitating French customs, while the three young Gauls were doing their best to be very Russian.

All of them wore linen much fringed at the cuffs, and of a color that was more than suspicious. One of the bearded ones held a greasy card in a knowing position between thumb and forefinger; it was to take the trick, and he brought it down with a knowing slap on the table in time with the music. A young lady who held a position of no particular responsibility in the Galeries Lafayette by day, and was an amateur of the affections by night, dropped a careless arm about his neck while she smiled knowingly over his head at a stranger who leaned his sleek brown head against a post. The bearded one—his name was Camous—who came from the Midi and was supposed by his doting parents to be applying himself to *le droit*, smiled up from his winning card at Loulou.

Loulou did not smile back. She knew all she wanted to know about Camous. He had no money, was stupid and talked very loud about what he meant to do,

in a Southern jargon one could only understand by listening very hard. They had none of them any money, the students; but not all of them were stupid. That was why Loulou had not given up the Café d'Harcourt. She never took thought for the morrow, but she loved being amused, and the Café d'Harcourt had already been sponsor for several quite entertaining little adventures.

The band—a violin, a flute and a wheezy piano—was playing "*Ah, si vous voulez de l'amour*" or "*Quand l'amour meurt*" or "*Le dernier soupir de l'amour*" or "*Je t'aime d'amour*"—Loulou was not listening, and did not know quite which.

The sleek-haired stranger at whom the lady from the Galeries Lafayette was casting provoking glances was not listening, either. Evidently no one thought him promising, for he sat alone at his little iron table. Loulou immediately obeyed a whim. She was full of the artistic temperament, was Loulou. She strolled over and sat opposite him at the little table.

The provoking man never noticed her for quite five minutes, just as if her being there were an accident instead of a design fully thirty seconds premeditated.

"You might at least order me a *bock*," suggested Loulou.

"*Garçon!*" immediately responded the stranger, in those simple words made classic by De Maupassant. "*Garçon—un bock!*" But he did not look at Loulou afterward; instead, he rested his brow upon his hand and sighed deeply.

"He has good clothes and clean linen," confided Loulou aloud to the surrounding atmosphere. "His hair is cut close, and he first got up about eleven o'clock

this morning. He has charming eyes and beautiful teeth. He looks very bored. I believe he is rich. I am certain he does not belong here!"

It was obviously in the young man's part in the little comedy to turn his eyes upon Loulou for a still more flattering inventory. Loulou was looking very well. She wore a beautiful blue frock quite decorous in cut, and a hat that rested on her shoulder blades in back and on the bridge of a coy little nose in front. Her chin was pointed and her lips were young and fresh. Her eyes—well, they were very revealing; but the strange young man showed no desire to look into them.

Such conduct was unprecedented in Loulou's experience. She lifted her hand and drew his slowly away from his eyes.

The young man was weeping!

The young man was weeping—it was an adventure! Loulou was more amorous of adventure than Haroun-al-Raschid. Her whole life was an adventure; and while in a monotonous and unconventional life an adventure consists in an escape into the unconventional and the shady, so many of Loulou's pet adventures were the homeliest of little incidents framed in a day of lurid chances.

"Weeping!" observed Loulou softly. "Come, my friend, you should not weep in the Café d'Harcourt."

Then, as the young man did not answer, she reconsidered. "*Tiens—tiens!* I believe, after all, it is rather *chic* to weep in a café."

Thus encouraged, the youth, with hand still held before his eyes, squeezed the tears stealthily away, removed his hand and looked at Loulou.

"I am done now," he said, "but I am still miserable."

"Why are you miserable?"

"Because I am unfortunate."

"We are all unfortunate," said Loulou. "Everybody is unfortunate. I, myself, have the worst luck in the world. Yesterday I lost twenty francs and spilled a bottle of ink over a frock that cost two hundred."

This made the young man smile, and also caused him to feel very superior to silly little Loulou, which restored his

self-esteem and did him good; which was exactly what Loulou had intended.

"Now are you going to weep any more?"

"No. Never again. Never any more. But I am very unfortunate all the same."

"What is the matter with you?"

"In the beginning, I am a poet."

"That in itself is unfortunate," commented Loulou. She had known a great many poets, and she did not like them very well. Poets were mostly conceited, dull and invariably young. In fact, to Loulou, being a poet seemed altogether a question of age; young men were poets from twenty to twenty-five, just as earlier they had been *collégiens* and later would be *employés de bureau*.

"But I am a *great* poet," said the young man, beginning to smile and showing his charming white teeth.

"Without *blague*?" she pursued.

"Don't fib to me, because really I don't care whether you are or not."

"Oh, really, really!" he assured her.

"Like Victor Hugo or Alfred de Musset."

"*Connais-pas*," commented Loulou.

"I don't know those gentlemen. Of course that makes things much more difficult—your being a great poet. Great ones never get anywhere."

She pouted a little over some secret dissatisfaction, but in her heart she began to like him better; not all on account of the poetry—principally because of the teeth.

"And you are weeping," she prodded patiently, "because heaven has been unkind enough to make you a great poet, instead of an ordinary poet, or just a common writer."

"Listen, mademoiselle," said the young man, becoming serious and intent. "You choose to misunderstand me; but I see nevertheless that you have the sympathetic heart, and to that I address myself."

"I am not making myself miserable because I am a poet, but because I am an unsuccessful one. You see, I have written a play in verse. My friend, M. Talbert, of the *Actualités*, encouraged me to write it. He said they would undoubtedly produce it at his theater."

Well—I have written it—I have sat up whole nights over it—I have poured my heart's blood into it. It contains the best of myself. Talbert has kept it—kept it six months from the rest of the world; and now he sends it back with a mere note. It will not do—my play."

"Is that all?" said Loulou, a little disillusioned. "Why, things like that happen every day. In the first place, I do not think you should have written your story in verse; and if you had you should have sent it, not to M. Talbert, but to the Français. They are always having plays in verse at the Français; that is one reason why I never go."

The young man sighed. "You see, you do not understand at all," he said. "If I do not write in verse, how is the world to know that I am a poet?"

Loulou sighed, too, and would have given him up but for the teeth. An adventure, however, is like love or marriage or a speculation on the Bourse: it is worth a little effort to carry to success.

"What shall you be doing tomorrow morning at half past nine?"

The young man smiled ruefully. "I shall probably be in bed."

"If you think it is worth your while, you may call on me at exactly half past nine."

"Why half past nine?"

"That is the hour I exact. If you cannot make sacrifices for me, why should you come at all? Rue de Constantinople, 308, *au troisième*. Knock three times."

"Why three times?"

"Because I exact it. It is my fancy."

"Shall I come alone?"

Loulou made a tremendous and noble effort. "No. Bring your tragedy, your tragedy in verse. You shall read it to me. My brain will be strong at half past nine in the morning."

The young man began to take notice. He even smiled. "Mademoiselle," he said, "I will come!"

Loulou rose negligently, just as if she had not been talking to him at all. She paused a moment before drifting through the door.

"What is your name?"

"Dupont—Raoul Dupont."

Then Loulou floated away, called a taxi and was off—whether to the swifter gaieties of Montmartre or home to the Rue Constantinople for meditation the young poet never knew.

Raoul was almost punctual. He knocked at the door of Loulou's apartment at twenty minutes to ten the next morning.

Loulou herself admitted him. Her hair was a little neglected, and it was difficult to tell whether her outer garment was a rock or a *peignoir*, but otherwise she was irreproachable; and her little *salon* was quite nice. There were in it *fauteuils*, chairs and a desk from the sidewalk of the Avenue des Ternes, doubtful treasures from the Rue de Sèvres, candlesticks, trays, footstools, coffee urns, little inlaid tables, a rug or two, pillows, boxes of cigarettes, charcoal sketches, battered prints, a book that told you how to tell your own future by cards, a nice little fire of *boulets* in the grate, and a disreputable Maltese cat stretched in front of it. Everything in the room except the grate and the cat seemed to be playing puss-in-the-corner; but the general effect was not bad.

Raoul took the largest and most comfortable chair by the fire, kicked the cat out of the way and warmed his feet.

"Come to thy *petite mère*, my child, and let her comfort thee," said Loulou. "Did you bring it?"

The first remark was addressed to the cat; the second to Raoul.

Raoul took "it" from his pocket, cleared his throat and would have begun reading at once, but Loulou temporized.

"What is it about?" she asked.

"You will find out gradually. It will unfold itself like a blossom expanding as I read. It is thus that a poem should be apprehended."

"No, it won't," declared Loulou bluntly. "I've heard poems before. I never can make head nor tail of them unless someone tells me what's coming. No *blague* now; what's it about?"

Raoul sighed deeply and condescendingly. "It is about a king," he said.

"They are all about kings nowadays," observed Loulou, meaning to be encouraging. "Kings are very *chic* this season. Every play I have seen has had one in it. They are funny fellows, kings. Take the most extraordinary liberties. My faith! I am not particular, but I would never stand for the things I have seen some of these kings do."

"Mine is not a king in a farce, mademoiselle. He is a romantic king, a king of times gone by."

"Oh!" observed Loulou. "That's the worst kind there is. What is his line, your king?"

"His name is Gundobad. He is a mighty hunter, and lives only for the pleasures of the chase. Women have no charm for him—"

"You are original there," interrupted Loulou. "None of the kings I saw were at all like that!"

"Women have no charm for him, but his counselors insist that he must marry, and arrange a wedding for him with the Princess Clothilde. Gundobad sends Hugo, his cousin and his secret enemy, to bring Clothilde and her retinue to his castle."

"Oh, I see your game now! Hugo makes love to Clothilde on the way and she loses her heart to him. I have seen that play quite often."

"Perhaps you would like to write my play for me, mademoiselle!"

Loulou apologized and bade him continue. She found his plot enchanting.

"Clothilde falls in love with Hugo, and is thus naturally predisposed not to love Gundobad. Indeed, she finds him so rough and distasteful that she swears she will never become his wife even for the pleasure of deceiving him. She sends a messenger to her father, begging his permission to marry Hugo, but before he can return, Gundobad insists upon an immediate wedding. Now Clothilde has a foster-sister, Elfride, whom she persuades to impersonate her; and Gundobad is tricked into marrying the maid instead of the mistress. Three days after the marriage the plot is betrayed to the King. He flies into a towering rage and swears

he will behead Hugo and marry Clothilde nilly-willy—"

"But how about Elfride? What is to become of her?" asked Loulou, beginning to show a faint spark of interest in the fable. "My word! Is she nothing at all, to be treated like dirt beneath their feet?"

"No, mademoiselle." Raoul smiled approvingly upon his critic. "She is not to be treated like the dirt beneath their feet. You apprehend with singular penetration the point of view of Elfride herself. It is Elfride, you understand, who is the heroine of my drama, and not Clothilde."

"Good! I begin to like your drama better. Go on."

"Elfride begins, you must understand, by being merely the tool of Clothilde. She ends by loving the King passionately."

"Ah, she is a girl of some spirit, that Elfride!"

"So you shall see. She loves the King passionately, and he, long strange to the ways of women, is quite mad about her."

"But I thought he meant to abandon her and take on Clothilde!"

"He is mad about Elfride as a man, but means to repudiate her as a king. It is here that Elfride steps to the front. This is the great scene of my play, as you will find—Elfride, by playing queen for three days, has become great in spirit; her love and humiliation become the love and humiliation of a queen. She reminds Gundobad of the love they have sworn each other. She inflames his mind against Clothilde as well as Hugo. She paints for him the ridicule that will fall upon him when he admits himself the victim of a hoax, tamely receiving to his bosom the woman who had deceived him. She reminds him that, as a king, he can make and unmake; it is his right to be as froward and violent as he will."

"And finally, in a burst of passion, she swears that either she will reign with Gundobad as his queen or do herself to death; never will she live to see another woman preferred above her! Let Clothilde go back to her father, or remain

as the slave of Elfride! *Voilà!* You have the character of Elfride."

"And what does the King do?"

"He swears by the rood that Elfride shall have her way; dresses Hugo and Clothilde in sackcloth, drives them from the court and lives happily with Queen Elfride forever after."

"It is not so bad!" said Loulou thoughtfully. "You may read it to me now; and skip as much as you like till you come to that place where Elfride enrages herself."

In high good humor the poet read. His verse flowed and pealed and thundered in the voices of Clothilde and Elfride and Gundobad. When any character had a flight of eloquence or fancy more than a page in length Loulou's attention wandered to the cat still sleeping in her arms; when retort came quick and sharp she listened.

On the whole, what with the flashing teeth, the charm of the young man's voice, she was able to feel some of the seduction of his graceful verse and to convince herself of the reality of his visions.

By the time he had reached the scene of Elfride's outbreak, Loulou's cheeks were flushed, her eyes bright and her whole being breathing out a vivid sympathy.

"Yes," she murmured—"yes—that's right. I believe you. I should think so, indeed!"

But when, for three whole pages without a break, the passion of Elfride had ebbed and flowed; when her appeal to the love, pride and savagery of the King was spent and Elfride herself, exhausted, had sunk upon the ground at Gundobad's feet, Loulou cried out, "No!" and sprang to her own.

"No!" cried Loulou, and repeated in contempt one of Raoul's couplets:

"Who once the wife of Gundobad hath been
Shall die his victim or shall reign his queen!"

"It won't do. It's too tame. That girl never in the world would have talked like that. I know, see—I heard a friend of mine go on when her lover left her. It was worth hearing, that! It was magnificent! Do you know what I should have said if I had been Elfride and you Gundobad? Listen!"

With her quick, untutored imagination she had seen herself as Elfride. The atmosphere of the past, the poetical language and imagery, were nothing to Loulou. She saw herself as a girl deserted. She raved, she wept, she swore, all in the vividest *argot* of Paris. She poured a torrent of biting and scathing insult upon the head of her rival; she alternately cajoled and upbraided her lover; and she ended by a threat of throwing herself from the window so sudden and startling that Raoul involuntarily glanced to see if it was locked.

"There!" finished Loulou, trembling but complacent. "That is the way your Elfride should go on!"

The effect upon her audience was more pronounced than she could have dreamed. Raoul sat as if hypnotized, his head between his hands, his precious manuscript fallen to the floor unheeded.

"How do you like that?" asked Loulou, her vanity thirsting for a little praise.

"Mademoiselle," said the young man, springing to his feet, "you are a great actress and a great genius. A flood of light has poured upon me till I am nearly blinded by it. Thank you—and goodbye!"

"Why, you are not going!" gasped Loulou in surprise. "You haven't finished reading your play!"

"And never shall."

"I was going to give you some lunch," she said timidly. "Do stay."

Raoul had seized his hat and his manuscript, and was hardly listening to her.

"When will you come again?" asked Loulou.

"Soon! Tomorrow! Every day!" and like a madman he had bolted out of the room and down the stairs.

"They're extraordinary, these poets!" said Loulou, and wiped away a tear or two.

In the course of several months the *Actualités* advertised a play by a new author, M. Raoul Dumont.

The critics said it was full of a singu-

lar charm, palpitating with modernity, and refreshingly, enchantingly youthful.

It was a barren season with Loulou, and she had some ado to scrape up five francs for a cheap seat. The frock and hat which she had worn on the night of her meeting with Raoul at the Café d'Harcourt were out of date and drooping, but she refreshed them as best she could, and betook herself to the gay little theater on the Boulevard. She had not seen the poet since; he had never come again.

It was a great success, that play. Loulou applauded and laughed and wept. It was the same play he had read to her in her little *salon*, and yet whole worlds away from it. Gundobad had become a young Parisian, a little *employé* who is seeking a good marriage. Clothilde is his employer's daughter, who consents to a betrothal to cover up a more engrossing affair. Elfride is a little orphan girl brought up in the family, half servant, half friend. Part of the story was pose, part the very stuff of life itself, for even poets have intervals of keeping their eyes and ears open.

And the scene that made all the difference between mediocrity and distinction, the scene that the critics had praised and that was bringing Paris of the boulevards and beyond to the theater, was the scene in which the little servant rises and reproaches her lover and swears that she will remain his wife or throw herself out of the window. Jeanne Carolan, the famous little actress of *gamine* parts, had never been able to be so deliciously her-

self before. And the words she used, racy, slangy and queerly pathetic all together, were nothing in the world but Loulou's own version of the high-flown tirade of Elfride, wife of Gundobad!

"I said that! I said that!" murmured Loulou to herself, and then pinched herself to see if it could possibly be true. To think that a real actress should be speaking her common little words and thoughts night after night in a real theater! But it was so; beyond doubt, it was so.

Loulou waited about in the lobby after the play was over. She could not bear to leave the wonderful place, and, besides, she had a presentiment. . . .

Sure enough, Raoul himself had been in the audience. He came out arm in arm with M. Talbert, the director of the theater. He looked older, did Raoul, and he was immaculately dressed, brushed and scented; his hat was high and glossy and his fur coat looked as if it had cost thousands of francs.

"Monsieur!" said Loulou timidly, and touched the poet's arm. She was afraid of the grand gentleman who accompanied him yet it did not seem possible that Raoul would not be glad to see her again.

Raoul looked at her, stiffened, raised his hat slightly and immediately passed on.

"Who was your little friend?" asked Talbert, as they stepped into the waiting motor.

"Someone I met in my student days," said Raoul, laughing carelessly. "I forget her name."



IT takes a woman with a past to keep a secret.



SOME men marry poor girls and settle down. Others marry rich widows and settle up.

THE MORALS OF PARIS

By William Richard Hereford

PARIS is so universally admitted by Anglo-Saxons to be the most immoral of cities that the statement would not offer ground for profitable discussion were it not for one consideration: it may not be true.

A discerning friend once remarked to the writer: "The Americans and the English can never be made to understand the French point of view; they might be persuaded to listen to its presentation, and they might even accept the information patiently and in good faith, but that would be all; they could never really comprehend the way in which the French people look upon questions of public and private morals—they simply could not understand it."

Perhaps this discerning friend is right. Difference of race and a corresponding difference of mental training may make comprehension difficult if not impossible, but, after all, the important fact to be brought home to Anglo-Saxons is that there *is* another point of view; whether it be right or wrong, whether it be more or less nearly correct ethically than our own, are questions each one must determine for himself, but, at least, to arrive at a decision one must have an intelligent conception of what the French viewpoint is.

Let us start with an illustrative anecdote; it is, perhaps, the best if not the only way of presenting the Latin attitude so that it will grip our Northern imagination. Because the persons concerned in this typical case are known to all Paris, their names are here disguised, but the circumstances are related accurately.

I have had the pleasure of meeting now and then in Paris a certain Prince

and Princess X. He is a gentleman of impeccable manners; she is a lady of immaculate dress. He is distinguished and cultured; she is—well, altogether charming. He is a member of one of the oldest families of France, leaders in that historic Faubourg Saint Germain set, which is so exclusive that even royalty cannot always obtain admission; she was—a singer at the Opéra Comique, and years ago her name was on everybody's lips; she was the toast of the boulevards, for she was as beautiful as she was talented.

During the time that she was a prima donna she was the friend, the *protégée*—how we Anglo-Saxons will resort to the French, and distort it, to express the thoughts that shock us so in print!—she was the protégée of this Prince X. They went everywhere together. She was received in that exclusive Faubourg Saint Germain set because she was talented and entertaining and was one of the greatest singers of France. She was made welcome in the home of the mother and father of the Prince, and there treated very kindly. No one inquired about her relations with him, or, it might be more accurate to say, those relations were taken as for granted. And then he married her. In America that would have made everything all right; in France it made everything all wrong. She was no longer received by the Prince's family; they shut their door upon her and upon him. Society banished them both.

Now if you understand that point of view, you have come quite near comprehending the French attitude toward what is an important phase of this question of morals. But perhaps it is wiser to be a little more diagrammatic. As a

singer with a wonderful gift, a talent that amounted to genius, of agreeable personality, pleasing, a very entertaining, human and comfortable person, with her position in the world clearly defined, she was welcome in the aristocracy, and they found her interesting. She was a public person; her private life, so long as there was no open scandal, concerned herself alone; to inquire into it too closely would have been vulgar curiosity. As an aristocrat in the world of the theater she was admitted into the society of those real aristocrats who constitute the *beau monde* of Paris. But as Madame la Princesse X.—that was altogether another affair. The Princess X., by the very nature of things, must be a lady of blood as blue as the blood of kings, and this the lady was not. The Princess X. must be socially their equal. As a prima donna her merit was unquestioned; but as the Princess X. she was sailing under false colors, she was obtaining entrance into society under false pretenses; and the Prince X. who had so far forgotten the *noblesse oblige* of his rank must take his place with her outside the doors that once so gladly opened to him. He had committed the unpardonable sin.

There you have it. The facts furnish their own comment. The French are logical, sometimes to a degree almost terrifying to us Occidentals who are supposed to be so blunt and direct. We are accustomed to think of the Latin mind as indirect, but it is really only their language that is indirect. Their thought goes straight to the point. We frequently amuse ourselves by picturing the Latins as steeped in sentimentality, but the Latin mind cannot be diverted from a logical though unsentimental conclusion. With the French there is always consistency between their thought and their actions. They do not believe, for instance, that the sacrament of marriage rights what was otherwise wrong; they consider, indeed, that marriage itself may in some cases be immoral, more immoral than unblest cohabitation.

This logic and consistency is exemplified in the frank manner in which they discuss those intimate questions that form such a big part of our life and which

are taboo in our conversation. We Anglo-Saxons must dodge about among unprintable words and so say things we do not mean to say, because it offends our nicer sense to hear or see passions with which we were created described by their proper names. Bernard Shaw, who shocks his English hearers by discussing primitive emotions in a primitive way, would have no possible chance for success in Paris. One of Shaw's plays, "Mrs. Warren's Profession," was "tried" in Paris last winter. Shaw perhaps never made a greater effort to shock his audiences than in this play, but it fell quite flat at the Théâtre des Arts. "This man is not telling anyone anything new," was the general comment.

The truth is that much of the reputation of Paris for immorality is due to the acquaintance of Anglo-Saxons with the night restaurants of Montmartre. You may read this advertisement in a Paris newspaper:

All foreigners who come to Paris visit
Montmartre and the Rat Mort.

Except for the last four words, the advertisement states the fact with melancholy exactitude, but it is illuminating to know that this announcement appears in a paper printed in English catering to American and English readers. One never sees in a French paper advertisements of these resorts, for their patrons come not from among the French. It is difficult to make visitors from over-sea or over-channel realize that they and not the painted creatures they see are the real show; they are unwilling to admit they are being humbugged, though they must often suspect it, for gaiety is simulated in such unconvincing fashion that only the very young or the very ignorant or the very vicious could possibly be deceived.

Just what Montmartre is, the Montmartre of the tourist, cannot be told convincingly in the few words that can be here devoted to this phase of the morals of Paris. It is enough now to point out the injustice of condemning Paris as immoral because of Montmartre's night resorts, which are maintained by and for foreigners. To condemn Paris for Mont-

martre is to condemn yourself for going there.

The social evil—again one of those misleading, incorrect phrases we must employ, and which ring with hypocritical cant—is regulated in Paris. Women who ply the trade that is the most ancient and, by common assent, the least honorable in the world are under police supervision. We will not argue about the right or the wrong of this. Each must make up his own mind about the economic and political wisdom and the ethical right of such questions. I am concerned only in making clear the French point of view. Paris is not at all shocked that the municipality should recognize and tolerate the social evil to the extent of having it regulated and controlled by the police, but, on the other hand, it is shocked to the point of incomprehension by recent revelations of graft in the New York police department in connection with this and other evils.

I was talking on this subject with M. Bertillon, the French scientist, whose name is known the world over because of his studies in criminology.

"This placing of vice under the control of a section of the police, allowing them a good deal of latitude and discretion, must have led to innumerable cases of 'graft,'" I remarked casually.

M. Bertillon was silent for several moments, searching his memory. "In the twenty-five years I have been connected with the police department," he replied finally, "I recall only one case of 'graft,' and in that instance the man was dismissed immediately."

One case of police graft in Paris in twenty-five years—and even while we were talking New York was furnishing to the world a scandal that revealed how vice was made to pay tribute, the guardians of the city in their rapacious greed hesitating not even at murder!

Paris licenses its immorality, if you wish to state the fact in that way, not because it seeks to encourage lewdness or lust, but because it believes that lewdness and lust and the tendency to gratify our animal desires exist in us all, and that this tendency is curbed to the best advantage of society if it be recognized and

regulated instead of ignored or "eliminated" by law.

Again one becomes aware of the logic of the Latin mind. All human flesh is heir to inconvenient inclinations, is the argument the French make, and we gain nothing by ignoring the fact or foolishly trying to legislate it out of existence. You cannot make them blind themselves to the disagreeable truth about this matter. Fathers recognize it in dealing with their adolescent sons. They seek to guide them rather than restrain them, and so to educate them in the world's way, that certain forms of vice shall, at least, be robbed of the added lure of curiosity.

In France there is one law for the man and another law for the woman. In this day of feminism this may appear anything but logical, but again I must leave the argument for the fact. The willingness of French fathers to lead their sons along paths that nearly all men have followed, some wandering further afield than others, cannot possibly shock American or English parents more than the unchaperoned liberty allowed American girls—and English girls, too, for the matter of that—would shock all French parents.

Morality is defined as embracing a man's duty toward himself, his fellow-men and his God, but Anglo-Saxons are accustomed to consider morality as referring to the seventh commandment alone. Just why we should be shocked more by the infraction of the seventh commandment than by the infraction of the sixth is not clear to the Latin mind. These Ten Commandments, which are at the basis of our moral life, exist in large part in all the important systems of religion. The Orientals, to whom we send missionaries, have their inspired code of ethics handed down from one prophet or another whose origin is more or less enveloped in the miraculous. Our Ten Commandments are to be found, sometimes added to and sometimes subtracted from, in the commandments that the followers of all prophets from Buddha to the Bab are taught to observe, and sometimes stress is placed upon one and sometimes upon another. In Japan, for in-

stance, the fifth commandment—honor thy father and mother—assumes an importance that has been sadly lost in its Occidental observance. For us of America and England the ninth and tenth commandments, which forbid us to bear false witness or to covet, have fallen into comparative desuetude. But we cling stanchly to the seventh.

About this seventh commandment lies much of the melancholy history of divorce. I have read that there were 72,062 cases of divorce tried in America during the year 1907, an increase of thirty per cent. over the record of 1867, forty years previous, and that the number of divorce cases is increasing every year. I have not at hand the statistics of divorce in France, but there is no question that it is proportionately very much smaller than in the United States or in England. In American society divorcées and divorcés are notoriously numerous. In English society they are to be met less often but occasionally. In French society a divorcée is as rare as an Albino in Africa.

Divorced persons are not considered "good form" in Paris. There are divorce cases, of course, but the parties to them are not to be found among those who pretend to social distinction. Those who allow secular courts to put asunder the bonds by which the church has united them are almost as marked as lepers would be.

I know divorcés and divorcées in Paris. I know one family where a wife was divorced and married her brother-in-law, and her brother was divorced and married the wife of his best friend, and this brother's divorced wife married the husband of the first wife mentioned, her brother-in-law. The case is complicated, and undoubtedly constitutes a record in "immoral Paris," but unfortunately all the persons concerned are Americans. They are wealthy and continue to be received in the American colony, but if such an invocation of the divorce law had been made by Parisians, even among the *bourgeoisie*, there is not an honest French woman's door that would be open to them.

I am reminded of another case of di-

vorce; this time the action is pending, or rather, the husband is awaiting in Paris the opportunity to bring the suit under the requirements of the Code Napoléon, which wisely prescribes that the service of notice of suit must be real and personal and may not be done by publication. This man is a Frenchman, but, again unfortunately, he is only a naturalized Frenchman; until he was nearly forty years old he was a citizen of the United States.

Years ago this man was at a Montmartre restaurant, one of those with flashing electric signs to attract moths that have flown too far from home. He had recently arrived in the city, and wished to see close at hand the immorality he had heard of so often. There he made the acquaintance of a *demi-mondaine*, a young woman of pleasing appearance, who wore her magnificent clothes in a manner that stamped her as a Parisienne. They had supper together, and the American flirted outrageously with her and tried to convince her of his sincerity. She was very matter-of-fact. He pretended to be a bachelor and a good many other things that he was not. She pretended to be only what she was. The supper over, the American rose to leave. His wickedness at that time consisted only in being a gay dog on the surface, and he was ready to say good night to his companion. She offered to conduct him to his hotel in her carriage.

Compelled at last to frankness, and secretly fearful that she was more designing than she appeared, he put the case bluntly. "You are wasting your time," he told her.

"Oh, I knew that from the first," she answered without embarrassment, "but I am going home. It is far to where you live, and it is not much out of my way. You have been kind enough to give me a charming supper. If you wish to go in my carriage there is room."

The novelty of it appealed to him. He scented an adventure.

At the call of the *chasseur*, a well appointed victoria with a coachman and footman in livery drew up to the door. When they arrived at his hotel the lady said: "Good night; thank you for a pleas-

ant evening," and the man went in to his family.

Now that same winter the American, who was in Paris ostensibly for the education of his children, met a divorcée. She was an American. It is not my purpose to condemn her any more than to applaud and approve the other woman, but contrast the evil wrought by this American divorcée with the frankness and comparative harmlessness of the French *demi-mondaine*. The American was not pretty; she was not young; she did not even dress well; but she was wise in worldly wisdom, and she had enough cunning to persuade this man that he was really a gay man of the world. She introduced him to the set in which she moved, and they flattered him, for he had plenty of money to spend. In a little while she had obtained a hold over him. He deserted his wife and his charming children; they were forced to return to America without him, and now he is a naturalized citizen of France because as such he can the more readily obtain the divorce he seeks. The life of his wife, a lovely and lovable woman, an intelligent, faithful companion, is ruined beyond repair; over his children, now nearing that age when they must learn the whole truth, hangs the pall of their father's shame that must be their own. That, I think, is one of the most immoral, and certainly it is the saddest, story I know about people in Paris; but, again, it must be stated that the only thing French about it is the man's acquired nationality.

Indeed, I have been sending my memory back over many years spent among Parisians, and I cannot recall a single Frenchman of my acquaintance who has been divorced except those whose wives were Americans or English—nearly all were Americans, in fact. And the only French women I have ever met who had been divorced from their husbands were actresses or singers.

In France infidelity on the part of the husband is considered to be not so much a crime as a weakness. This remark really applies to Paris alone, and is not applicable to France as a nation, but I have stated the general fact because

what we are after is an understanding of the French point of view, and for the present purpose Paris must be taken as representative of all France, though often it is not. In Paris you may find the "*ménage à trois*," that curious condition of complacent connubiality which French romancers love to depict and Anglo-Saxons love to read about; it exists, but it is rarer than French novelists would lead one to suppose. Senators, deputies, under-secretaries and men of wealth and position in and out of public life take under their protection women of the stage, actresses or singers; or it may be that the protégée has not even the stage as an ostensible means of livelihood and is frankly a *demi-mondaine*. You may see these men with these women in public places, on the streets, at the race-courses or at restaurants. The relationship is notorious; often no attempt is made to conceal it. The man's family must know of it, but rarely is there any resulting scandal.

These are true facts, but it is equally true that the Frenchman surrounds his home with a sanctity that we would regard as austere, and he protects his family with a zealous care that we would look upon as rigorous to the point of tyranny. Friends do not "drop in upon" a French home after our manner. They do not stay unexpectedly to dinner; they are not invited to make long visits or to spend the night when in the city instead of going to a hotel. Women do not have the freedom of the house because the wife is their friend; men do not call without invitation because the husband is their intimate. Strangers or mere acquaintances are not entertained in the home of a Frenchman. To all the outside world the French home presents an air of formality that strikes the Anglo-Saxon as cold, but I venture to assert that nowhere are there happier homes or more of them than in France, and nowhere are the relations that exist between the various members of the family more cordial, respectful, considerate and affectionate.

If you ask me to reconcile these facts, I can only say that the husband's relations outside of his home with women

other than his wife are looked upon as a natural weakness; it is smiled upon and condoned. Again it would be well to illustrate by an example:

In Paris there is a playwright whose name is known and respected in many lands. He is no longer young. His wife is old, older than he if we reckon by surer standards than the hourglass. This playwright has contracted a *liaison* with a young actress who appears in his plays. After the theater he goes with her to her home, and in her congenial company remains until his old wife sends the carriage for him; and it often happens, particularly if the night be cold or stormy, that she is waiting for him at her rival's door with a heavy coat that he may not take cold. Shocking? Immoral? Granted; but all Paris knows of it, and all Paris, though it considers the old man foolish and the old wife overfond, would find it infinitely more shocking if now this playwright, who has risen to fame, were to divorce the companion of his obscurer years and take to share his fame and prosperity this actress as his wife.

Among the poorer people there is an indifference to the necessity of legal marriage which has often been cited as showing the immorality of the French, but it should be borne in mind that much of this is due to the stringency of laws which require the consent of parents to a marriage, to the expense attendant upon having the marriage formalities observed and, in no small measure perhaps, to another provision of the Code Napoléon which forbids the so-called "research" into the paternity of a child.

As a part of this question of public morals, it should be mentioned that newspapers in France may not publish accounts of divorce or separation proceedings either to be begun or during the trial. They may print only the judgment of the court without comment. It therefore happens that unhappy tales of domestic discord are never spread across the page to add sauce to the French family breakfast or dinner. As a matter of fact, the Frenchman doesn't read his newspaper at the table, but, no matter where he elects to read it—gen-

erally it is at his café—there are no scandals about his friends or acquaintances or about people he does not know and does not care about to interfere with his digestion.

When Madame Curie, inventor of radium, one of the benefactors of the world, was accused a few months ago by a jealous wife of wrecking a home, only one respectable Paris newspaper made mention of the fact, and that newspaper apologized the next day for having done so. This is not the place to discuss Madame Curie's innocence or culpability, but now that the subject has been mentioned—and you will find that it has to do with this question of morals pretty closely—justice requires the statement that, in this attack upon Madame Curie's reputation as a woman, chauvinism and rabid anti-semitism obscured the truth and raised a whole multitude of doubts, of which surely Madame Curie should have received the benefit, in the name of decency and right and that chivalry of which Americans are so fond of boasting in their attitude toward women. But the fact remains that, though no French newspaper gave publicity to the scandal, it was reported at length in at least one London daily—in only one, I am glad to believe—and the newspapers of America regaled their readers with columns of the most suggestive and salacious material they could gather on the subject.

Now the French law of libel is not such as to affright any editor. There was no understanding, as I happen to know, between the editors to protect Madame Curie. Each one acted for himself and arrived at his own conclusion, and that conclusion was unanimous. It was the French point of view in regard to the conduct of newspapers. It might thus be expressed: A woman who has consecrated her life to seeking those things which lift the world to a higher level; whose labor has been devoted to the benefit of all mankind; whose great intelligence has achieved results no other person has obtained—such a woman is not to be dragged down, her fame soiled, her mind distracted, her labors interrupted and her soul harassed, no, not even if it were

proved irrefutably (which it was not) that she had fallen below that standard of morals which we others who have been able to do so much less have set up for ourselves. We shall not be the ones first to cast the stone, was the French point of view.

But quite apart from those whose ill opinion of Paris rests entirely on hearsay or is gained from incomplete and superficial observation, there are not a few whose more honest judgment is formed on a basis much worthier of respect—the novels and plays of French authors. To the average Anglo-Saxon the novels that interest Paris are meretricious and immoral; to them the plays Paris laughs at are vulgar and obscene. It is much easier to admit that this criticism is justified than it is to combat it, for one must go far to find a reasonable excuse for much that is seen on the Parisian stage; but, again, it must be admitted that there is another point of view.

Paris will excuse almost anything if it be witty, and few of the French plays that live overnight are stupid. The French mind is not shocked to see used upon the stage for the purpose of amusement or ridicule subjects which we would mention only with shame. The French laugh lightly at conditions we regard solemnly. Tolstoi somewhere describes a deceived husband as experiencing first of all surprise that this situation, which he had been so long accustomed to regard as comic, was really tragic.

Undoubtedly the liberty allowed French playwrights often develops into license. I have heard French women deplore the absence of a censor in France, but in this, as in nearly every other field of human endeavor, the French have a respect for individual liberty that would not tolerate such supervision. The public and the playwright must work out their own salvation. The authorities regard the matter as affecting taste more than morals.

There is also this fact that should be pointed out; Paris will not go to see a play merely because it is obscene. In New York it has been demonstrated more than once that the public will flock

to a play that has been condemned by the preachers or that has been threatened by the police. The French regard themselves as too wise to be caught with that sort of bait. No theatrical manager in Paris, for example, would pay five thousand dollars a week to a dancer because her press agents had skillfully but shamelessly connected her name with that of a young monarch at the time he lost his throne through revolution. That story was told in Paris; it originated there. It was printed, perhaps paid for; but the Frenchmen smiled and found the rather obscure dancer no more and no less interesting than she had been before. So she went to America and made a fortune, and the Frenchmen smiled more than ever.

In regard to modern French literature in so far as fiction is concerned, I must risk being considered *plus royaliste que le roi*, and express the conviction that the French novels of today do not portray the real life and customs of the Parisians. And the same holds true of the drama.

The contemporaneous literature of no people, least of all of the French, can be accurately characterized in a few phrases, but it has seemed to me that French modern writers have lost themselves in the fascinating pursuit of psychology, and their characters are no longer portraits in the sense that the plays of Molière were pictures of his time. This is not an unusual condition; indeed, it is quite usual. Perhaps in the whole history of France, for instance, no more immoral period has been chronicled than that just preceding the French Revolution—and surely it was a time of ferment and unrest—but the plays of that epoch were sweet and mild and restful and filled with sentiment. It was then that Boucher painted his innocent marquises fresh and simple as the pastoral scenes in which he set them. They were not less anodyne than the plays of that seething time. The popular novel of that day was "Paul and Virginia," which every schoolgirl has read.

The taste for psychology of which I have spoken is universal in France. It exists among the young and the old and

among people of all conditions. The fascination of personal analysis and spiritual dissection appeals to all grades of mentality. The playwrights and novelists, trained in their craft, devise those situations which will best serve to employ their art and which they are certain will meet with popular appreciation, but which, though they may be justified on the plea that "they *might* have happened," as a matter of fact do not happen, except in rare cases and in modified form.

It would be interesting to know how large a proportion of English and American readers have formed their derogatory opinion of French literature from "Sapho" and "Les Contes Drôlatiques," and yet it is likely that these persons never stopped to consider, if indeed they knew, that Daudet dedicated "Sapho" to "my two sons, to be read when they have attained twenty years of age." A father does not bequeath to his twenty-year-old sons a book that is immoral. As for Balzac's "Droll Stories," those amusing tales of Touraine, told with a master's art in the quaint Old French, veritable *tours de force* in picturing the life of that time, are they more frank and unconventional than the tales of our own Chaucer?

But instead of novels and stories and plays, many will undoubtedly prefer to consider the French essayists, philosophers and critics, who from the time of Descartes have led the world's thought and against whom no charge of frivolity or lewdness or insincerity can lie. For

my own part, when I hear Anglo-Saxons deplore the degeneracy of French literature it affords me satisfaction to think of a book that was first published something more than half a century ago, Michelet's "L'Amour," written, as says the distinguished author, when "*France était malade*" because the fervid life of the time had forced men to be calculating, cold and repressive. It is a plea for love; it would not be too much to say that it is the evangel of love. In words of exquisite simplicity the historian describes the joys of that pure, true love which, as says Lemaître, is life itself, painting with his masterful touch a picture he wished to make so beautiful that it would win the youth of France away from the worship of material things and encourage them in the pursuit of the ideal.

I do not know of such a book in any other language written for such a purpose.

It has not been my aim or desire to prove that Paris is a moral city, or even that it is more moral than other big cities. If such defense of the beautiful capital of France is necessary, it must be left to abler and more authoritative writers. All that has been here attempted is to narrate facts generally known but even more generally neglected, which illustrate the French point of view; and if these plain facts and contrasts bring a pause to lips about to pronounce a hasty judgment upon the morals of a great people, I have not failed in my task.



AT DAWN YOU GO

By Eleanor Walsh

AT dawn you go, and all hot tears,
All dreams and hopes and visions bright,
All the young love of all the years
Is crowded in our love tonight.

LYRICS OF SPRING

By Bliss Carman

WHEN you hear the white-throat pealing
From the cedars far away,
And the hills are touched with purple
At the borders of the day;

When the red-wing sounds his whistle
At the coming on of spring,
When the joyous April pipers
Make the alder marshes ring;

When the wild new breath of being
Whispers to the world once more,
And before the shrine of beauty
Summons spirit to adore;

When long thoughts come back with twilight,
And a tender deepened mood
Shows the eyes of the beloved
Like hepaticas in the wood;

Ah, remember—when to nothing
Save to love your heart gives heed,
And Spring takes you to her bosom,—
So it was with Golden Weed.

II

Oh, well the world is dreaming
Under the April moon,
Her soul in love with beauty,
Her senses all a-swoon.

Pure hangs the silver crescent
Above the twilight wood,
And pure the silver music
Wakes from the marshy flood.

O Earth, with all thy transport,
How comes it life should seem
A shadow in the moonlight,
A murmur in a dream?

THE SMART SET

III

Over the wintry threshold
 Who comes with joy today,
 So frail, yet so enduring,
 To triumph o'er dismay?

Ah, quick her tears are springing,
 And quickly they are dried,
 For sorrow walks before her,
 But gladness walks beside.

She comes with gusts of laughter,—
 The music as of rills;
 With tenderness and sweetness,
 The wisdom of the hills.

Her hands are strong to comfort,
 Her heart is quick to heed;
 She knows the signs of sadness,
 She knows the voice of need;

There is no living creature,
 However poor or small,
 But she will know its trouble,
 And hearken to its call.

Oh, well they fare forever,
 By mighty dreams possessed,
 Whose hearts have lain a moment
 On that eternal breast.



HE—I love the good, the true, the beautiful.
 SHE—This is so sudden!



THE man who hesitates is accepted.



THERE is only one thing a woman dislikes more than a jealous husband, and that is one who isn't jealous.

EXPERIMENTS

By William Harper Dean

AS the liner's whistle opened with a deep, sullen boom, Rolfs turned quickly in his steamer chair and looked down the avenue of deck.

"Garrison Island ahead, and your lord and master afoot," he said lightly, stepping behind the girl's chair, reaching down and pressing her hand. "Lady Mason, I vanish!"

For a moment he stood watching her from the saloon door; then his big, serge-clad figure was lost to view.

The girl had neither answered nor moved, but with heightened color looked out to sea, while the wind fluttered and snapped the blue tie of her middie blouse and sought to tear away the filmy scarf protecting her rich brown hair.

A small man, straight, keen-eyed and brown-skinned, in white uniform, stopped at her chair and smiled down into her blue eyes.

"My dear, you are to be court-martialed for desertion. Come forward; I want you to see the black boys dive."

He extended his right hand. The left hand was gloved and the arm hung straight. Without a word the girl uncrossed her silken ankles and rose. The color had left her cheeks.

"So you really think you don't care to land with me? Rather keep on and let me meet you in San Francisco?" he asked patronizingly as they started forward.

"Yes, I've fully decided on that."

"Very well, Peggy; I guess you're right. It's a stupid old island at best. My experiments will be so that I can leave them in three days, and then the cutter will bring me straight to San Francisco. By the way, Peggy, last night, when you decided you'd keep on,

I spoke to Rolfs. He promises to look out for you the rest of the voyage and help you land. You met Jack the first day out, remember?"

"Oh, yes; Mr. Rolfs, of the diplomatic corps?"

"Exactly—fine fellow. We've been thrown together quite often. Perhaps he will tell you all about Creedmore—"

"Who is Creedmore?" she asked differently.

"Only Jack can tell you about that—our agreement, you know," he replied with a mirthful smile. "Well! Here's one of those crazy little boats with the black boys!"

He pulled her quickly to the port rail, where the passengers had congregated and were looking over.

The little craft was within fifty yards of the great, drifting liner, when from over its sides a dozen naked blacks dived and swam close under the liner's tiers of decks, treading water, shouting up to the passengers. Someone tossed over a coin, and as it struck the water a dozen ebony bodies swooped down after it as gracefully as porpoises.

"Look, Peggy, see them! There's the coin—see it flashing—that little shiny speck way down!" He was pointing and smiling at her eagerly.

She looked and nodded languidly.

Up bobbed a dozen kinky heads. A black arm held aloft the coveted coin for a moment, and then clapped it into a huge mouth as a veritable shower of coins sent the divers wriggling grotesquely down through the clear water.

"That white boy, that cotton-headed one—who is he?" she asked.

"Oh, yes; I meant to tell you. He's

the wireless operator of this ship. He goes in for the fun of it—see him toss his coin to the black boy? Now watch him dive!”

The girl's face livened. She waved her hand to the bronzed, laughing face that kept its distance from the jabbering blacks. He saw her and waved back. The girl held up her hand a moment, then threw something overboard that sent his body down in a sweeping white flash until it was all but lost to view. When he rose to the surface he held up his arm. Something in his fingers glittered and sparkled.

“That was—” Her husband turned a queer face to her.

“My solitaire,” she answered, with returning languor. “Isn't this your launch?”

He looked down to see a trim white craft send the divers scampering through the water. There came a sharp order, a clanging of a little gong, and the launch drew up close to the liner's side.

“Captain Surgeon Mason aboard?” sang out a voice from under the launch's striped awning.

He kissed her on the cheek and grasped her hand. “Good-bye, Peggy; see you in San Francisco. Rolfs will look after you.”

The girl watched him descend over the side, his gloved hand and arm hanging straight. She waited until he had been transferred and the launch had spun around on its heel and headed for the island. Then, as the liner swung outward to sea, she started back to her chair. The color began to mount her cheeks.

Rolfs was there, waiting.

He rose and arranged her chair, watching her keenly from under his heavy black eyebrows. “You have sped the parting guest?” He sat down beside her.

“His bone-splicing experiments have begun,” she answered, with a silent little laugh and a curling of her red lip.

He laughed queerly. “What about your own experiment, Peggy? It's been in progress for two years now, hasn't it?”

She toyed with her fluttering tie. “Well, I know more about mine than

about his. He doesn't tell me much of *those*, you know.”

He leaned forward suddenly. “Don't you find it fearfully boring—this experimenting? Should a woman experiment—always?”

“Is there *anything* a woman can enter that is not an experiment?” Her eyes met his own in sudden challenge.

Rolfs glanced about quickly. They were alone. He took one of her hands in his own great ones. “There is if the man and the woman know each other from the beginning—and a woman always knows. Do you know me better now than you do your husband?”

“I—yes.”

“And you know I love you, Peggy?”

“Yes—so does he love me.” She avoided his steady gaze and looked away.

“And you him?” He pressed her hands the harder.

“Do you need ask that?”

“That's right; don't say it—you don't have to tell a man who understands. Then, Peggy, is the experiment worth while—yours, I mean? Be honest with me—I love you, Peggy.”

She colored deeply and drooped her eyes. “I don't believe this is an experiment.”

He leaned forward and kissed her fiercely. “I'm going to leave you now. Think it over. Think what it means to you—and to me. Be honest with yourself—stop experimenting!”

He waited a moment, but still she did not look up.

“I've arranged for a private dining room tonight,” he said with an offhand air; “I'll come for you at eight.”

He left her.

She sat looking out over a smooth, heaving sea. The hot color came and went in her cheeks. Somewhere forward the ship's band was playing gaily. Laughter floated across the decks. Everything, even the gulls that wheeled and cried above the churning wake, seemed full of life and joy. She laughed, a queer, nervous laugh; then rose and went to her stateroom.

Neither human ingenuity nor riches had been spared in the fashioning of

that little dining room. A soft mist of pink light touched the chased silver and scintillating glass. The flowers were of color and fragrance to perfect the charm. A retinue of attendants forecasted and fulfilled every desire, taste and whim.

The girl wore her rarest gown. Strangely enough, it was pink and filmy and touched with gold. Her round neck and shoulders glowed a richer, warmer pink than the most ingenious light or wall tint. Her eyes had turned a deeper blue, her lips a richer, warmer red.

"And this," she was saying to the broad-shouldered Rolfs, "is another of our contested points."

She raised her wine glass to her lips.

"So much the better," he smiled.

"Fortunately I have never lived in a clam shell, to think all the world peopled with clams. That, I suppose, is one difference between the scientist and the diplomat."

She placed the empty glass at her side. The silent attendant refilled it deftly.

"No, I always think of those things as being differences in the men themselves."

"Thank you. Shall we drink to the difference?"

They did. The attendants performed their duty. The orchestra's dreamy waltz notes floated through the room. The girl leaned forward. Her color had heightened; her eyes were sparkling.

"Jack," she said tremulously, "I love this—all of it! I love to forget there's such a thing as a surgeon's knife or—or bone-splicing!" Her eyes were moist; her voice was trembling with the infectious charm, the hour, the man who smiled back into her eyes. "Is this hobby of his such a great thing? Bone-splicing, bone-splicing! Ugh!" She was laughing a soft, half-hysterical laugh. Suddenly she changed. With a quick pressing together of her palms she straightened and drank her wine. "Jack," she bubbled, the sparkle in her eyes fairly snapping with effervescent joy—"oh, Jack, tell me about Creedmore!"

Rolfs's face went gray for an instant. "Did he tell you about that?" he asked quickly, regarding her keenly.

"No, no; he said only you could tell me. Tell me, Jack!"

His color returned. "Oh, that's a long day story—not for such a night as this. Peggy!" He leaned forward tensely and dropped his voice to a whisper. "What have you thought since this evening?"

She picked up her glass quickly and emptied it. "I didn't have to think long, Jack."

Rolfs turned to the attendants and nodded. They vanished like black ghosts.

"Then you *will* marry me?" He grasped her jeweled hands and covered them with his own against the table.

"Yes, but how?"

"Don't you think he would release you?"

"I—I think he would, Jack. He's not selfish."

"Good! My name need never be mentioned, you know. You can secure the separation, and Jack will happen along—see?"

"Yes." She was looking down at the snowy linen.

"And if that doesn't work, there's another way, Peggy. So long as Reno is the white woman's hope, no man is truly married."

She nodded, breathing heavily. He rose, went around to her and kissed her red lips. "Let's go on deck," he said.

"May—may I smoke, Jack?" she asked, looking up timidly.

His hand went to his pocket and brought out the gold case. "A thousand pardons," he laughed, opening it for her.

"Another of our contested points," she laughed softly and easily.

Rolfs's laugh was a deep chuckle. He studied her greedily through the blue smoke of her cigarette.

On deck the night was soft and sweet. A huge, golden moon had climbed straight above the liner's towering masts.

"Come along," said Rolfs suddenly, taking her arm. "There's a bit of self-indulgence in store for us."

He led her to the open door of the wireless room. The cotton-headed operator sat before the keys, receiver clamped

to his ear, green eyeshade covering the upper part of his face. He looked up, pulled back the shade and smiled at the girl with his gray eyes.

"Hello!" he called, with the wholesome freemasonry of his type. "Here's your ring—it's a beauty, all right."

Rolfs, writing at the desk, turned, frowning, as he passed the ring. "Send this, will you?" said Rolfs, handing him the sheet. "Wait a moment. Here, Peggy, look at this."

She read it in a low voice:

"CAPTAIN SURGEON MASON, Garrison Island:
All is well with us.

PEGGY AND JACK."

She looked at Rolfs and smiled meaningly, then passed the sheet to the operator.

As he took it he glanced swiftly at Rolfs and then at the girl.

"Here she goes," he said lightly; and the next moment he was working the key while the blue spark flared and screeched in the little glass sphere.

"She's gone," he called, releasing the key and putting the receiver to his ear. Still watching Rolfs speculatively, he propped his feet on the desk and began to roll a brown paper cigarette.

"Have one of these." Rolfs proffered the gold case.

"No, thanks," said the cotton-headed man; "I outgrew those long ago," and laughed devilishly. He smoked while his visitors stood in the doorway talking; now and then he made a remark or answered a question. Suddenly he seized a pad and began to write, then handed the sheet to the girl.

Rolfs led her out on deck. "What does he say?" he asked.

"He says: 'God bless you both.'" She looked out to sea.

Rolfs threw back his dark head and laughed softly. "Do you know, Peggy, it sounds to me like, 'God bless you, my children!'"

With a stifled exclamation, he whirled suddenly around, from the impact of a heavy body, which righted itself and went tearing down the deck, uttering terrified cries.

The deck instantly became a scene of

terror. Men in shirt sleeves, unshaven, wild-eyed; women of dark skin, clothed in gaudy calico and with children in their arms, went stampeding aft, yelling, screaming in foreign tongues.

"The steerage has gone mad!" gasped Rolfs.

The girl was clinging to him, trembling. At that instant a gust of hot, smoke-laden air blew in their faces, and as though to complete the hitherto wild, meaningless drama, a voice in English yelled, "Fire!" They were roughly jostled and torn apart.

"Jack—Jack!" she called wildly, running through the mad crowd. Uniformed ship's officers were bawling orders, the while buckling on revolver belts. Grimy, barefoot seamen panted past, dragging lines of hose; men, women and children clustered a moment, then rushed helter-skelter crying names, crying, "Fire!" And, to add to the pandemonium, the ship's siren began to rip the air with its shrieks.

The girl ran forward, half stunned from the impact of men's bodies as they crashed into her and knocked her to the deck. She struggled up, ran on and called at the top of her voice, but Rolfs did not answer. She screamed as she saw the forward hatches belch up inky smoke and yellow flames. She half crawled around the deck, calling, calling. Men trampled on her. Her dress was torn in a dozen places. Sparks filled the air and burned her neck and arms.

Suddenly she found herself alone with the siren's din, the roar and crackle of flames, the lurid glare. A new babel of shouts and screams went up from the stern. She staggered up and fought to the crowd. Lifeboats were filling and being lowered away. Haggard, grimy officers stood with their backs to the rail and boats, striking out with revolver butts as crazy men grappled and fought for the chance for life.

"Jack! Jack!" she screamed madly, but her voice was lost in that chaotic din. She looked wildly over the rail into the crimson, heaving sea, and sank with a moan, a little huddle of torn, scorched pink.

The boats were filling as fast as the

officers and grim, silent seamen could heave the women into them. The officers were firing now, the revolver shots punctuating the din at times with staccato crispness. Women screamed anew; men dropped to the decks like the dead wild beasts they were. The heat was now intense. Half the ship was a seething hell. Hissing and roaring, rocket after rocket was piercing the fiery glow and bursting into the cool, dark night beyond.

And suddenly the girl looked up after the fusillade of shots and thudding bodies to see a huge, wild figure fighting like a demon with a dozen of the crew. His hair and face were bloody, his dress tie hanging in a string. A life preserver was about his waist.

"Jack—Jack—for God's sake!" screamed the girl, staggering up.

His right arm was flying out straight from the shoulder like a battering ram, and whenever it landed a man went down like a felled ox. A seaman pulled her back.

"Look out!" he yelled into her ear. "He's crazy—God, what an arm!" he cried, as Rolfs mowed his way to the boat swinging in the davits, the women huddled in its bottom in a whimpering, moaning mass.

She tore herself away from the man and fought to Rolfs.

"Jack—Jack—this is Peggy!"

For a single instant he turned his livid, horrible face to her, and then sent his right fist crashing against the temple of a fighting officer. He leaped into the swinging lifeboat. For an instant it swung madly in the davits, then like a flash turned turtle, scattering the women and children into the sea below.

The girl turned drunkenly and started up the deck. A man grabbed her arm.

"Come on—here's a place—last one!"

"I—I don't want to be saved!" she sobbed. The man left her and ran.

Straight to the open door of the wire-less room she went, as though drawn by the magnetism of the little blue flame that flared in the glass sphere but could not be heard. She steadied herself in the doorway.

The cotton-headed man looked up.

His face was very white, but a burning brown paper cigarette was in his clenched teeth. He did not stop his hand that worked the key with all the strength and will there was in him.

"Run!" he yelled. "Take a boat!"

The girl laughed weirdly and steadied herself as a blast of smoke and sparks filled the room.

She half fell forward and clutched his shoulder. "They're all—gone!" she gasped into his ear.

He smiled queerly and released the key. In a trice he had dived under his berth and snatched out a cork jacket. He fastened it about her slender waist and seized her arm.

"Jump overboard!" he ordered.

She pulled herself away. "Not till you go," she called in a voice that seemed to echo his own steel will.

"Jack gone?" he said fiercely.

She began to sob hysterically.

He leaped to the table and handed her a sheet. There, with a roaring hell sweeping to the very door, she saw the blurred, dancing letters:

Jack—protect my wife. Remember Creedmore.

The cotton-headed man had buckled on his own cork jacket. "Cutter's coming!" he yelled to her through the smoke, as once more he began to pound the key. He leaped up and grabbed her arm. "Come on!"

"Wait!" she gasped. "Call the cutter!"

He shot one glance at her ashen face and caught at the key, holding with one hand to her arm.

"Tell—my—husband—"

"Got Mason—quick!"

"I—remember"—she dictated into his ear while the ceiling blistered and smoked.

Flash—flash—flash!

"Creedmore—"

Flash—flash!

"Will protect Peggy with life!"

The glass sphere fairly burst with the leaping flame.

The cotton-headed man grabbed her up bodily. "Hell!" he snarled, and dashed with her across the blazing deck.

He lifted her to the rail, and the next moment carried her clear and straight down to the sea in a great, leaping dive.

When they came up to the surface she was still in his arms. Something struck his shoulder. He caught it with one hand, and drew himself upon the splintered and half-wrecked liferaft. When he dragged her limp form beside him the raft tilted and sank fearfully. But it kept afloat. He dragged her body to him until her head was against his shoulder. The water, as he knelt, was above his knees. Bodies were swimming and floating about in the brilliant water. Above the sullen roar of the burning ship came a chorus of oaths and screams. Nowhere was there a lifeboat in sight.

He felt her wrists. Her pulse was beating. He shook and pounded her brutally. She opened her eyes and moaned.

"Pull yourself together—no time for sobs!" he said roughly.

Her eyes widened into full consciousness. She smiled at him.

"That's the stuff! Now, can you get to your hands and knees? That'll balance this thing and give us an even break."

She obeyed with feeble limbs. He crawled to the other side of the raft. The balanced structure rose a good three inches.

"Hang on to the slats and keep your nerve! Cutter's coming under full steam, and can't miss us," he called cheerily. "All you want is to keep your head and— Look out!"

The raft had tilted fearfully. He turned to see a pair of hands on its edge and a man's wild face as he struggled to haul himself aboard.

"Let go!" yelled the operator. "She won't hold but two—let go, damn it—you'll sink the woman!"

The girl caught sight of the man's illuminated face.

"Jack—Jack!" she moaned, and buried her face in her arms.

With an oath the cotton-headed man crawled to the edge of the raft and brought his fist crashing down upon the fingers. "You—"

His body flopped backward, almost

into the sea, as Rolfs's right arm shot out and landed full.

"God, what an arm!" groaned the operator, sitting up.

Never a word uttered the man in the water. He edged around the raft, holding by his fingers. The next instant he reached and seized the girl's clothes. She screamed and went dragging to the edge.

With a quick, fearful oath the cotton-headed man leaped squarely overboard and upon the swimmer, and bore him down. The big hand tore loose, filled with a mass of wet, shredded pink.

There began a terrific conflict out in that blood red sea. The bodies of the men floundered and churned horribly, their quick panting telling of the desires throbbing under the cork jackets. The girl looked on from her cringing hold upon the slats. She saw the cotton-headed man's fingers buried and locked in Rolfs's throat. For a moment his eyes glared horribly and his face went black. Then his arm shot forward. The fist landed squarely in the cotton-headed man's face. His head flew back with a loud snap and touched his shoulder blades. There was a shuddering struggle, then the men were still. She saw them drifting silently, the vise-like fingers in the blackened throat.

She clutched the slats until her fingers seemed in flames.

In a white room aboard the cutter she opened her eyes. Mason was bending over her, his fingers on her pulse.

"Thank God! Peggy, do you know me?"

With a feeble little cry, that was more a prayer, she struggled to put her arms about his neck. He put his right arm under her and kissed her cheek.

"There, there," he choked, "you're all right, Peggy. Dear old Jack—"

She shuddered and clutched him wildly. "John—John," she whispered, "who—was—Creedmore?"

"Peggy," he replied brokenly, "at Creedmore was my first experiment—"

He choked and looked at his limp arm. "I gave this to make Jack's good right arm."

"MABEL, GO PUT ON YOUR HAT"

By Leonard Merrick

CARTER had been a widower for nearly five years when the bank transferred him to the Blithepoint branch, and the change was not disagreeable to him at first. After Islington, a watering place that pretended to be fashionable looked well in his eyes.

It was when he had been in the town some weeks that he began to be bored. It had been the season when he came down, but now the season was over, and Blithepoint resumed its normal air of depression. Carter viewed the blank Parade, shivered in the northeast wind—the wind is always northeast in Blithepoint—and thought wistfully of the London theaters, where several pieces were running that he would have liked to see. He was an ardent playgoer, and had once been an amateur of some distinction.

The manager's residence in Blithepoint was above the bank—a residence absurdly spacious for a widower without a family. It got on Carter's nerves. He used to wander from one room to another in the evening, missing his chums, and, occasionally, his late wife. He was only forty-five, and looked young for his age. It often occurred to him that a pretty woman over the bank would improve the premises vastly. Of course he formed plenty of acquaintances by degrees; it was his duty to form acquaintances; he was on smiling terms with all the former clients, and had contrived to capture a few new ones. The bank, indeed, was very satisfied. But Carter was not satisfied; he could not be said to have a friend here; there was no man whom he wanted to go to see, or whose arrival

meant a jolly evening. He was lonely, sad, inclined to be sentimental.

One Sunday, Pierpoint, the bandmaster at the Winter Garden, invited him to supper. Carter, of course, said that he would be "delighted," not because he cared about Pierpoint—a large, red man, with a boisterous laugh—nor because he liked Mrs. Pierpoint, an untidy, tedious woman; nor yet because the invitation was one of those that he was required to accept in the bank's interest; as a matter of fact, Pierpoint's account was not worth keeping. He said he would be "delighted" because anything was preferable to sitting alone in the spacious residence and yawning over a novel from the drug store. So he went, and, to his surprise, there was a pretty girl in an esthetic gown there, whom he had never seen before.

"Mr. Carter, our great banker—Miss Dora Wyniard, the great actress!" said Pierpoint facetiously.

"How do you do?" said Carter, regarding her with admiration.

"Miss Wyniard only got in an hour ago—she's been traveling all day," remarked the hostess. "I'm sure you must be worn out, dear; I expect you'd much rather have gone to bed!"

"Oh, I wouldn't, indeed!" said Miss Wyniard. "I think it was most awfully kind of you to ask me."

"Railway journeys," observed Carter, "are very tiring, especially on Sundays." It was necessary to say something, and he couldn't think of anything else.

"Odious," assented the girl. "And we've come all the way from Sheffield."

"She's in the Ibsen crowd," explained

the bandmaster; "they are at the Royal tomorrow."

"Oh!" said Carter, who had not examined the playbills yet.

"I think Sunday trains are simply appalling," she went on. "And the towns when one arrives, too—everything shut up! Tonight is really gorgeous, coming to a place like this, and having friends to go to."

Carter found the evening much pleasanter than he had expected it to be. And when he learnt that she was not staying with the Pierpoints and she rose to say "Good night," he offered to see her home. Her lodging was at some distance from the house, so the stroll—they did not walk at all briskly—took nearly half an hour.

"You are very interested in the stage, Mr. Carter, aren't you?" she asked by and by.

"Tremendously—er—Ibsen and all that!" he said.

"Oh, of course—when one says the 'stage' one really means Ibsen, doesn't one? I couldn't bear to play in some of the modern things, there's nothing in them!"

"Awful rot!" agreed Carter, whose favorite theater was the Gaiety. "Down here one misses the best frightfully, you know. I can't bear the sort of piece they get here as a rule."

"You must come and see us," she advised him.

"I shall come tomorrow night," he declared. "I should come to see *you*, if you weren't playing Ibsen."

"Really?" she said coquettishly.

"Honor bright!"

"But I may be an awful actress; you don't know!"

"Instinct! But even if you were—"

"You'd still come?"

"By Jove, I would! It sounds—well, you may think it just a compliment, but I never met anybody I—I mean to say I never met anybody who took me out of myself as you have done this evening! It has been quite a red letter day."

"How strange!" murmured the girl. They had come to a standstill at the steps of her shabby apartments.

"Strange?"

"That *you* should have felt that, too! But I—I suppose some people do understand each other at once." She put out a gentle hand. "It's ever so kind of you to have come all this way with me."

"I wish," said Carter gallantly, "that you had been staying much further off. Good night, Miss Wyniard."

"Don't forget tomorrow—I do hope I sha'n't be a disappointment! Good night, Mr. Carter."

He strode to the bank with more buoyancy than he had known for months, and though the only play of Ibsen's that he had ever seen had bored him to the verge of extinction, he caught himself looking forward to the following evening with something like romantic eagerness.

On the morrow he half expected to meet her during his "constitutional," but the Parade was as dull as ever. He wondered whether he should scribble a note after the performance, congratulating her. She had "hoped that she wouldn't be a disappointment"—in the circumstances he felt bound to express his appreciation. Yes, he would certainly send a line to her; indeed, she ought to receive it before she left the theater. But he would hardly have time! Perhaps the best plan would be to pencil something pretty on the back of one of his cards before he went. Or should he wait and see her when she came out?

Eventually he decided upon waiting; he decided during the progress of the play, and there was a touch of unfamiliar excitement in the thought that he alone among the audience was going to talk to Hilda Wangel after the curtain fell. He wished that he understood what the piece meant, but doubtless he could conceal his mystification on the subject; he composed one or two compliments which he felt sure would gratify her, and approached the stage door with mingled feelings. For him to stand there, frankly waiting, might provoke gossip—in his position he could not be too careful. He crossed the road, and sauntered on the opposite side of the

street, and finally overtook her at the corner.

She had not expected to see him, and was far from being so well dressed as she had been on the previous evening; her surprise was not altogether pleasurable.

"Mr. Carter!"

"I couldn't resist waiting to tell you how splendidly you played," he said.

"Oh!" she beamed. "I'm so glad you liked me."

"You—you carry the piece on your shoulders. You must have lived in the part to play it as you do!"

She felt that he was really very nice.

As before, he walked to her lodgings with her, and when she reminded him that on Wednesday and Thursday they were to do "A Doll's House," he said, of course, that he was intending to see her "Nora."

He saw her "Nora," and her "Hilda" again, too; indeed, during the week he saw Miss Wyniard very often. And as the tour was to finish on Saturday, and she spoke of remaining in Blithpoint for a rest, their acquaintance was in no immediate danger of being cut short.

"I've been rather seedy," she explained, "and Blithpoint will do me good. I should have liked to go home, but my mother and sister live in Balham—I don't think that Balham is the place for me just now. The doctor said I ought to stay here for quite a month if I could."

"It would do you all the good in the world," said Carter. "It's so bracing. Is your sister an actress, too, Miss Wyniard?"

"N—no," she said. "No, my sister isn't an actress. My mother is elderly, and someone has to stay with her, you see. Don't look at me so anxiously. I'm not ill; it's only that I've been working so hard. You mustn't fancy I'm an invalid. On the contrary. I mean to go in for no end of walks down here and see the country."

"There's some very pretty country," said Carter. "I'm a bit of a walker myself—or I used to be when I had more time."

"I suppose the bank doesn't leave you much leisure for that sort of thing."

"Oh, well, I get out of the town every afternoon, you know, when it's fine. I should like to show you something of the neighborhood, if you'll let me?"

She was delighted at the prospect. "It would be beautiful!" Before long they were excellent friends—that is to say, they called themselves "friends." They met almost daily; there were one or two evenings when they sat in the stalls of the Royal together; one Sunday she and the Pierpoints went to supper with Carter. He mentioned in an undertone how solitary he found the quarters, and her glance was sympathetic. People talked; it was rumored that Carter was engaged to Miss Wyniard. When the time came for her to return to London, the bank manager realized that Blithpoint would be more than ever desolate when she had gone.

Well, why shouldn't he ask her to marry him? He debated the point constantly, the novel from the drug store neglected, and the lonely rooms looking lonelier to him still. He told himself there was no reason whatever if she would leave the stage. But—she spoke so much of her "Art"—did she care for him enough to give it up? She might hesitate to make the sacrifice. It would certainly mean an enormous change in her life; he could not pretend that she would find the place gay, and it might be years before he could contrive to get removed.

He proposed to her at tea in her apartments, and she said that, much as she loved her Art, she loved him more, and that she quite understood it wouldn't do for him "to be married to an actress." As a matter of fact, her hardships on the stage—she obtained few engagements, and meager salaries—had made her loathe it violently, and she contemplated an adequate home and an amiable husband with thanksgiving too deep for words.

So they were engaged; and Carter was presented to the elderly mother and Mabel, the sister. And as there was nothing to cause delay, the wedding took place a few weeks later; and he bought some more furniture and a piano, and the cashier remarked that he went

upstairs oftener than he used to do during banking hours, which was natural enough, with a pretty wife to kiss at the top.

Of her mother and Mabel he saw nothing after his marriage. Dora expressed no wish for them to visit her, though she corresponded with them regularly, and as the railway service between Blithepoint and town was execrable, the happy pair did not take any trips to Balham.

Once a week they went to the local theater. For the rest, their life was practically eventless. In moments it surprised him that she was contented by so quiet a program. Privately he had often thought that he would much rather have been an actor than a bank manager, and when he contrasted the career that his wife had relinquished with the humdrum existence that she appeared to enjoy now, he felt that her good humor was a high testimonial to the charms of his society.

It was when they had been married about six months that her demeanor first gave him cause for uneasiness. Putting two and two together, he attributed her concern to a letter that she had received; now that he came to think of it, she had pocketed the letter hastily when it was read, and said nothing of its contents. He had assumed that it came from Balham, for she had few correspondents anywhere else; but if there was bad news from Balham, why should she make a secret of it?

Casually he inquired: "By the way, dear, have your mother and sister enough to keep them comfortably? If there's anything we can do now and again, you know you have only to mention it."

"Darling!" she said. "But they manage on what they have got very well, thanks all the same."

So it wasn't trouble from Balham! Yet something was wrong, and he observed that her nervousness increased as the days went by. When he questioned her openly, she declared that she didn't know what he meant, and laughed at him for his "silly fancies," but her laugh was false, and she had

changed color in a way that Carter didn't like.

On Sunday, when Carter spoke of going to church—in the bank's interest he went to church every Sunday morning—his wife answered that she had a headache, and that she thought a quiet hour on the sofa was the only thing that would relieve her. She certainly did look very pale, and Carter fussed sympathetically. He saw her settled among the cushions, brought her smelling salts, darkened the room and took leave of her, trusting that she would soon feel better. It surprised him considerably on his return to hear that she was not at home, and his surprise increased when she had not come back in time for "luncheon," which was the name they gave to their early dinner.

"When did Mrs. Carter go out?" he asked.

"She went out directly after you did, sir," said the servant. "I thought she had changed her mind and gone to church."

"Oh!" said Carter. "Very well. I'll wait."

She entered soon afterward, and explained that she had had no idea it was so late. It had occurred to her that a gentle saunter on the Front might do her more good than coddling on the couch, so she had gone out "about half an hour ago."

Carter offered no comment on this, but either the servant had made a curious mistake, or his wife was lying. He was taciturn over his after-"luncheon" pipe, and he could not avoid reflecting that he had married a girl of whom he knew very little. A woman's history should be an open book to her husband: what had he seen of Dora's? He had met a stranger at supper one night, talked to her, flirted with her, fallen in love and married her. Reviewing the courtship, he recognized that he knew scarcely more of her experiences than he had known when he made her acquaintance. He had done an impulsive thing! Happy as he had been hitherto, his action had been rash. Supposing—

But he would not dwell on such ter-

rors! What grounds were there for supposing anything of the kind? His alarm was exaggerating trifles, making a mountain out of a molehill. She was devoted to him, positively devoted! Doubtless she had some little innocent secret which he would learn and laugh at before long!

Nevertheless, his wife was absent from the house very often during the next few days, and there was an evening when his anxiety was intensified a thousandfold. They had paid their weekly visit to the theater, though, for the first time, Dora had been reluctant to go, had argued against going, insisted that the piece—a musical comedy—was dreary rubbish, and that it would be wasting money to see it. Carter held a different view. He reminded her that they patronized other musical comedies, so why not "The Best of All Girls"? In the end he had his way. Catchy songs, chorus girls and the humors of a low comedian always entertained him, and he would have been well amused on the present occasion but for his wife's discomposure. It was evident that by persuading her to come he had condemned her unwittingly to a severe ordeal. Her voice when she answered him was tremulous; he noticed that the program shook in her hand. She was frightened! Of what? It could only be of being found out!

Carter's blood ran cold. Her agitation was due to someone behind the footlights. Everything was clear now—on Sunday morning she had gone to meet an actor at the station! Every day she had been meeting him somewhere since! Which was the man?

Outwardly calm, the bank manager sat in his stall with the rage of hell in his heart. Gradually his suspicions concentrated themselves on the tenor; and to watch the woman's bearing when the tenor was prominent, he kept turning his head to her with some seemingly careless remark. Once he noted a bead of perspiration on her upper lip, but she was so unnerved through the entire performance that it was impossible for him to be really sure which artist's presence on the stage affected her the most.

Presently he realized that he must not let her see she was suspected; to betray any emotion would be to put her on her guard. When they reached home, he burned to seize her by the throat and drag a confession from her, but instead he forced himself to make small talk. He lounged on the hearth, smiling, with his hands in his pockets, and she could not guess how passionately the hands were clenched. Very soon she was saying that she was sleepy, but now he was spurred on by malice, and, pressing her to remain, he found a vindictive pleasure in framing his commonplaces in such a way that answers were required to them.

"It's a capital show," he said, "isn't it?"

"Very," she sighed.

"Which of them did you think played best?"

"Oh, I don't know, really."

"I thought the fellow that played the valet was very funny, didn't you?"

"Oh, yes."

"Funnier than the old man?"

"Oh, well, I didn't care a great deal about either of them."

"I thought you said you did. What was the matter with them?"

"The matter?"

"Weren't they good actors?"

"They were all right."

"Then why didn't you like them? You said you didn't 'care about either of them.'"

"I meant that I didn't feel particularly— What's the difference?"

"I think it's nice to talk over a performance when one gets back," he said cheerfully. "What did you think of the tenor? A bit of an ass, wasn't he?"

"Why?" she asked.

"Seemed an affected sort of johnnie to me; he couldn't act a scrap. I wonder what he gets paid for that sort of thing?"

"I wonder?" she yawned.

"How much should you think?"

"I've no idea."

"Ten pounds a week?"

"Perhaps."

"Or not so much?"

"Perhaps not so much." She got up.

"I must really go, dear—I'm so tired I can't keep my eyes open."

When the door closed, Carter mixed a strong whiskey and soda, and determined to follow her the next time she left the house. A scandal would not advance him with the bank, but if his surmise were correct he promised himself the gratification of administering a thrashing at any cost—he would thrash her lover first, and divorce her afterward! The difficulty would be to ascertain the moment when she went out.

He stole upstairs a dozen times next morning, but, as if she divined his purpose, she was always discreetly occupied—reading or sewing, a picture of domesticity. In the afternoon, too, he spied upon her without result. Then, about four o'clock, just as he was looking up an account in the outer office, he had a glimpse of his wife passing the window. He sped back to his room, caught up his hat and reached the pavement before she was out of sight.

Twilight was gathering. She traversed High Street swiftly, and, drawing as close to her as he dared, Carter kept her well in view. At the Quadrant, she forsook the shops, and branched into a quarter that was comparatively strange to him, a quarter monopolized by decayed houses, of which the majority announced "Apartments Furnished." His pulses tingled; it was here that the professionals found their lodgings. Shabbier and dirtier still grew the houses, and when he was least expecting it, she mounted a flight of steps and rang the bell.

He stopped short, trembling violently. Where he stood, neither could see the other, but he could detect something in the shape of a sign on the area railings, and felt sure of identifying the house when he proceeded.

After a minute he crept forward. The sign proclaimed that the householder effected "light removals." The doorstep was bare—she had gone in. Car-

ter made a leap, and gave the bell a gentle pull.

A slattern with bare arms inquired his business. Before she could remonstrate he was in the passage.

"I want the lady who just came. Upstairs, or down?"

"Well, I'm sure—" she began.

"Upstairs, or down?" demanded Carter imperiously. Then, without waiting for an answer, he flung into the nearest room.

It was a bedroom and parlor combined. His wife was there, shrinking before him. He stood eyeing her and her companion voicelessly. At last he gasped:

"Mabel!"

For it was his sister-in-law who was with her. He was too intensely relieved to wonder, in the first moment, why they both showed such consternation.

"Mabel?" he repeated, open-mouthed.

"Yes, it's m—me," she stammered.

"And you m—m—mustn't blame poor Dora, because she can't help having a sister who's a chorus girl; we've all got to live, and I'm not clever, like her, and I d—d—do what I can! I'm a good girl, if I am in the ch—chorus. And if Dora didn't tell you what I was, it was only because she knew you'd think it a d—d—disgrace."

"Disgrace?" cried Carter. "What, you're one of the chorus in 'The Best of All Girls'? We saw the show the other night, and I never recognized you!"

"I was so afraid you would!" moaned his wife. "I was afraid you would, directly she wrote that the company was coming down here."

"The gentleman will be good enough to hunderstand," exclaimed the lady, appearing on the threshold, "that I cannot 'ave such himpudent hintrusions! I never saw the like!"

"That's all right, madam," said Carter gaily. "Very sorry to have offended you, I'm sure! This lady and I have called to ask your lodger to come and stay with us, that's all. Mabel, go put on your hat!"



THE BEERIAD

By H. L. Mencken

LET the most important facts come first. The best beer in Munich is the Spatenbräu; the best place to get it is at the Hoftheater Café in the Residenzstrasse; the best time to drink it is after 10 P.M., and the best of all girls to serve it is Präulein Sophie, that tall and resilient creature, with her appetizing smile, her distinguished bearing and her superbly manicured hands.

I have, in my time, sat under many and many superior *kellnerin*, some as regal as grand duchesses, some as demure as shoplifters, some as graceful as *prima ballerini*, but none reaching so high a general level of merit, none so thoroughly satisfying to eye and soul as Präulein Sophie. She is a lady, every inch of her, a lady presenting to all gentlemanly clients the ideal blend of cordiality and dignity, and she serves the best beer in Christendom. Take away that beer, and it is possible, of course, that Sophie would lose some minute granule or globule of her charm; but take away Sophie and I fear the beer would lose even more.

In fact, I know it, for I have drunk that same beer in the Spatenbräukeller in the Bayerstrasse, at all hours of the day and night, and always the ultimate thrill was missing. Good beer, to be sure, and a hundred times better than the common brews, even in Munich, but not perfect beer, not beer *de luxe*, not super-beer. It is the humane equation that counts, in the *bierhalle* as on the battlefield. One resents, somehow, a *kellnerin* with the figure of a taxicab, no matter how good her intentions and fluent her technique, just as one resents a trained nurse with a double chin or a glass eye. When a personal office that a man might perform, or even an intelligent machine,

is put into the hands of a woman, it is put there simply and solely because the woman can bring charm to it and irradiate it with romance. If, now, she fails to do so—if she brings, not charm, not beauty, not romance, but the gross curves of an aurochs and a voice of brass—if she offers bulk when the heart cries for grace and adenoids when the order is for music, then the whole thing becomes a hissing and a mocking, and a gray fog is on the world.

But to get back to the Hoftheater Café. It stands, as I have said, in the Residenzstrasse, where that narrow street bulges out into the Max-Joseph-platz, and facing it, as its name suggests, is the Hoftheater, the most solemn-looking playhouse in Europe, but the scene of appalling tone debaucheries within. The supreme idea at the Hoftheater is to get the curtain down at ten o'clock. If the bill happens to be a short one, say "Hänsel und Gretel" or "Elektra," the three thumps of the starting mallet may not come until eight o'clock, or even 8.30, but if it is a long one, say "Parsifal" or "Les Huguenots," a beginning is made far back in the afternoon. Always the end arrives at ten, with perhaps a moment or two leeway in one direction or the other. And two minutes afterward, without further ceremony or delay, the truly epicurean auditor has his feet under the mahogany at the Hoftheater Café across the platz, with the seidel of that incomparable brew tilted elegantly toward his face and his glad eyes smiling at Präulein Sophie through the glass bottom.

How many women could stand that test? How many could bear the ribald distortions of that lens-like seidel bottom and yet keep their charm? How many,

thus caricatured and vivisected, could command this free reading notice from a casual American, dictating against time and space to a red-haired stenographer, three thousand and five hundred miles away? And yet Sophie does it, and not only Sophie, but also Frida, Elsa, Lili, Kunigunde, Märchen, Thérèse and Lottchen, her confrères and aides, and even little Rosa, who is half Bavarian and half Japanese, and one of the prettiest girls in Munich, in or out of uniform. It is a pleasure to say a kind word for little Rosa, with her coal black hair and her slanting eyes, for she is too fragile a *fräulein* to be toting around those gigantic German schnitzels and bifsteaks, those mighty double portions of sauerbraten and rosbif, those staggering drinking urns, overballasted and awash.

Let us not, however, be unjust to the estimable Herr Wirt of the Hoftheater Café, with his pneumatic tread, his chaste side whiskers and his long-tailed coat, for his drinking urns, when all is said and done, are quite the smallest in Munich. And not only the smallest, but also the shapeliest. In the Hofbräuhaus and in the open air *bierkneipen* (for instance, the Mathäuser joint, of which more anon) one drinks out of earthen cylinders which resemble nothing so much as the gaunt towers of Munich cathedral; and elsewhere the orthodox goblet is a glass edifice following the lines of an old-fashioned silver water pitcher—you know the sort the innocently criminal used to give as wedding presents!—but at the Hoftheater there is a vessel of special design, hexagonal in cross section and unusually graceful in general aspect. On top, a pewter lid, ground to an optical fit and highly polished—by Sophie, Rosa *et al.* poor girls! To starboard, a stout handle, apparently of reinforced onyx. Above the handle, and attached to the lid, a metal flange or thumbpiece. Grasp the handle, press your thumb on the thumbpiece—and presto, the lid heaves up. And then, to the tune of a Strauss waltz, played passionately by tone artists in oleaginous dress suits, down goes the Spatenbräu—gurgles, gurgles—bubbles, bubbles—down goes the Spatenbräu—exquisite, ineffable!—todrench

the heart in its nut brown flood and fill the arteries with its benign alkaloids and antitoxins.

Well, well, maybe I grow too eloquent! Such memories loose and craze the tongue. A man pulls himself up suddenly, to find that he has been vulgar. If so here, so be it! I refuse to plead to the indictment: sentence me and be hanged to you! I am by nature a vulgar fellow. I prefer "Tom Jones" to "The Rosary," Rabelais to the Elsie books, the Old Testament to the New, the expurgated parts of "Gulliver's Travels" to those that are left. I delight in beef stews, limericks, burlesque shows, New York City and the music of Haydn, that beery and delightful old rascal! I swear in the presence of ladies and archdeacons. When the mercury is above ninety-five I dine in my shirt sleeves and write poetry naked. I associate habitually with dramatists, bartenders, medical men and musicians. I once, in early youth, kissed a waitress at Dennett's. So don't accuse me of vulgarity: I admit it and flout you. Not, of course, that I have no pruderies, no fastidious metes and bounds. Far from it. Babies, for example, are too vulgar for me; I cannot bring myself to touch them. And actors. And evangelists. And the obstetrical anecdotes of ancient dames. But in general, as I have said, I joy in vulgarity, whether it take the form of divorce proceedings or of "Tristan und Isolde," of an Odd Fellows' funeral or of Munich beer.

But here, perhaps, I go too far again. That is to say, I have no right to admit that Munich beer is vulgar. On the contrary, it is my obvious duty to deny it, and not only to deny it, but also to support my denial with an overwhelming mass of evidence and a shrill cadenza of casuistry. But the time and the place, unluckily enough, are not quite fit for the dialectic, and so I content myself with a few pertinent observations. *Imprimis*, a thing that is unique, incomparable, *sui generis*, cannot be vulgar. Munich beer is unique, incomparable, *sui generis*. More, it is consummate, transcendental, *übernatürlich*. Therefore it cannot be vulgar. Secondly, the folk who drink it

day after day do not die of vulgar diseases. Turn to the subhead *Todesursachen* in the instructive *Statistischer Monatsbericht der Stadt München*, and you will find records of few if any deaths from delirium tremens, boils, hookworm, smallpox, distemper, measles or what the *Monatsbericht* calls "liver sickness." The Münchenerers perish more elegantly, more charmingly than that. When their time comes it is gout that fetches them, or appendicitis, or neurasthenia, or angina pectoris; or perchance they cut their throats.

Thirdly, and, to make it short, lastly, the late Henrik Ibsen, nourished upon Munich beer, wrote "Hedda Gabler," not to mention "Rosmersholm" and "The Lady From the Sea"—wrote them in his flat in the Maximilianstrasse, overlooking the palace and the afternoon promenaders, in the late eighties of the present, or Christian era—wrote them there and then took them to the Café Luitpold, in the Briennerstrasse, to ponder them, polish them and make them perfect. I myself have sat in old Henrik's chair and victualled from his table. It is far back in the main hall of the café, to the right as you come in, and hidden from the incomer by the glass vestibule which guards the pantry. Ibsen used to appear every afternoon at three o'clock, to drink his vahze of Löwenbräu and read the papers. The latter done, he would sit in silence, thinking, thinking, planning, planning. Not often did he say a word, even to Fräulein Mizzi, his favorite *kellnerin*. So taciturn was he, in truth, that his rare utterances were carefully entered in the archives of the café and are now preserved there. By the courtesy of Dr. Adolf Himmelheber, the present curator, I am permitted to transcribe a few, the imperfect German of the poet being preserved:

NOVEMBER 18, 1889, 4.15 P.M.—*Giebt es kein Feuer in diese verfluchte Bierstube? Meine Füße sind so kalt wie Eiszapfen!*

APRIL 12, 1890, 5.20 P.M.—*Der Kerl ist verrückt!* (Said of an American who entered with the Stars and Stripes flying from his hat.)

MAY 22, 1890, 4.40 P.M.—*Sie sind so eselhaft wie ein Schauspieler!* (To an assistant Herr Wirt who brought him a Socialist paper in mistake for the London Times).

Now and then the great man would condescend to play a game of billiards in the hall to the rear, usually with some total stranger. He would point out the stranger to Fräulein Mizzi and she would carry his card. The game would proceed, as a rule, in utter silence. But it was for the Löwenbräu and not for the billiards that Ibsen came to the Luitpold, for the Löwenbräu and the high flights of soul that it engendered. He had no great liking for Munich as a city; his prime favorite was always Vienna, with Rome second. But he knew that the incomparable malt liquor of Munich was full of the inspiration that he needed, and so he kept near it, not to bathe in it, not to frivol with it, but to take it discreetly and prophylactically, and as the exigencies of his art demanded.

Ibsen's inherent fastidiousness, a quality which urged him to spend hours shining his shoes, was revealed by his choice of the Café Luitpold, for of all the cafés in Munich the Luitpold is undoubtedly the most elegant. Its walls are adorned with frescos by Albrecht Hildebrandt. The ceiling of the main hall is supported by columns of colored marble. The tables are of carved mahogany. The forks and spoons, before Americans began to steal them, were of real silver. The chocolate with whipped cream, served late in the afternoon, is famous throughout Europe. The Herr Wirt has the suave sneak of John Drew and is a privy councillor to the Prince Regent of Bavaria. All the tables along the east wall, which is one vast mirror, are reserved from 8 P.M. to 2 A.M. nightly by the faculty of the University of Munich, which there entertains the eminent scientists who constantly visit the city. No orchestra arouses the baser passions with "Wiener Blut." The place has calm, aloofness, intellectuality, aristocracy, distinction. It was the scene fore-ordained for the hatching of "Hedda Gabler."

But don't imagine that Munich, when it comes to elegance, must stand or fall with the Luitpold. Far from it, indeed. There are other cafés of noble and elevating quality in that delectable town—plenty of them, you may be sure. For

example, the Odéon, across the street from the Luitpold, a place lavish and luxurious, but with a certain touch of dogginess, a taste of salt. The *piccolo* who lights your cigar and accepts your five pfennigs at the Odéon is an Ethiopian dwarf. Do you sense the romance, the exotic *diablerie*, the suggestion of Levantine mystery? And somewhat Levantine, too, are the ladies who sit upon the plush benches along the wall and take Russian cigarettes with their kirschenwasser. Not that the atmosphere is frankly one of Sin! No, no! The Odéon is no cabaret. A leg flung in the air would bring the Herr Wirt at a gallop, you may be sure—or, at any rate, his apoplectic corpse. In all New York, I dare say, there is no public eating house so near to the far-flung outposts, the Galapagos Islands of virtue. But one somehow feels that, for Munich, at least, the Odéon is just a bit tolerant, just a bit philosophical, just a bit Bohemian. One even imagines taking an American show girl there without being warned (by a curt note in one's serviette) that the head waiter's family lives in the house.

Again, pursuing these haunts of the baroque and arabesque, there is the restaurant of the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten, a masterpiece of the Munich glass cutters and upholsterers. It is in the very heart of things, with the royal riding school directly opposite, the palace a block away and the green of the Englischer Garten glimmering down the street. Here, of a fine afternoon, the society is the best between Vienna and Paris. One may share the vinegar cruet with a countess, and see a general of cavalry eat peas with a knife (hollow ground, like a razor: a Bavarian trick!) and stand aghast while a great tone artist dusts his shoes with a napkin, and observe a Russian grand duke at the herculean labor of drinking himself to death.

The Vier Jahreszeiten is no place for the common people: such trade is not encouraged. The dominant note of the establishment is that of proud retirement, of elegant sanctuary. One enters, not from the garish Maximilianstrasse, with its motor cars and its sinners, but from the Marstallstrasse, a sedate and

aristocratic side street. The Vier Jahreszeiten, in its time, has given food, alcohol and lodgings for the night to twenty crowned heads and a whole shipload of lesser magnificoes, and despite the rise of other hotels it retains its ancient supremacy. It is the peer of Shepherd's at Cairo, of the Cecil in London, of the old Inglaterra at Havana, of the St. Charles at New Orleans. It is one of the distinguished hotels of the world.

I could give you a long list of other Munich restaurants of a kingly order—the great breakfast room of the Bayerischer Hof, with its polyglot waiters and its amazing repertoire of English jams; the tea and liquor atelier of the same hostelry, with its high dome and its sheltering palms; the pretty little open air restaurant of the Künstlerhaus in the Lenbachplatz; the huge catacomb of the Rathaus, with its medieval arches and its vintage wines; the lovely *al fresco* café on Isar Island, with the green cascades of the Isar singing on lazy afternoons; the café in the Hofgarten, gay with birds and lovers; that in the Tiergarten, from the terrace of which one watches lions and tigers gamboling in the woods; and so on, and so on. There is even, I hear, a temperance restaurant in Munich, the Jungbrunnen in the Arcostrasse, where water is served with meals, but that is only rumor. I myself have never visited it, nor do I know anyone who has.

All this, however, is far from the point. I am here hired to discourse of Munich beer, and not of vintage wines, bogus cocktails, afternoon chocolate and well water. We are on a beeriad. Avaunt, ye grapes, ye maraschino cherries, ye puerile H₂O!

And so, resuming that beeriad, it appears that we are once again in the Hoftheater Café in the Residenzstrasse, and that Fräulein Sophie, that pleasing creature, has just arrived with two ewers of Spatenbräu—two ewers fresh from the wood—woody, nutty, incomparable! Ah, those elegantly manicured hands! Ah, that Mona Lisa smile! Ah, that so-graceful waist! Ah, malt! Ah, hops! Ah, München, wie bist du so schön?

But even Paradise has its nuisances, its scandals, its lacks. The Hoftheater Café, alas, is not the place to eat sauerkraut—not the place, at any rate, to eat sauerkraut *de luxe*, the supreme and singular masterpiece of the Bavarian uplands, the perfect grass embalmed to perfection. The place for that is the Pschorrbräu in the Neuhauserstrasse, a devious and confusing journey, down past the Pompeian post office, into the narrow Schrammerstrasse, around the old cathedral, and then due south to the Neuhauserstrasse. *Sapperment!* The Neuhauserstrasse is here called the Kaufingerstrasse! Well, well, don't let it fool you. A bit further to the east it is called the Marienplatz, and further still the Thal, and then the Isarthorplatz, and then the Zweibrückenstrasse, and then the Isarbrücke, and then the Ludwigbrücke, and finally, beyond the river, the Gasteig or the Rosenheimerstrasse, according as one takes its left branch or its right.

But don't be dismayed by all that verisatality. Munich streets, like London streets, change their names every two or three blocks. Once you arrive between the two medieval arches of the Karlsthor and the Sparkasse, you are in the Neuhauserstrasse, whatever the name on the street sign, and if you move westward toward the Karlsthor you will come inevitably to the Pschorrbräu, and within you will find Fräulein Tilde (to whom my regards), who will laugh at your German with a fine show of pearly teeth and the extreme vibration of her 195 pounds. Tilde, in these godless States, would be called fat. But observe her in the Pschorrbräu, mellowed by that superb malt, glorified by that consummate kraut, and you will blush to think her more than plump.

I give you the Pschorrbräu as the one best eating bet of Munich—and not forgetting, by any means, the Luitpold, the Rathaus, the Odéon and all the other gilded hells of victualry to northward. Imagine it: every skein of sauerkraut is cooked three times before it reaches your plate! Once in plain water, once in Rhine wine and once in melted snow! A dish, in this benighted republic, for

stevedores and yodlers, a coarse feed for violoncellists, barbers and reporters for the *Staats-Zeitung*—but the delight, at the Pschorrbräu, of diplomats, the literati and doctors of philosophy. I myself, eating it three times a day, to the accompaniment of *schweinesrippen* and *bonensalat*, have composed triolets in the Norwegian language, a feat not matched by Björnstjerne Björnson himself. And I once met an American medical man, in Munich to sit under the learned Prof. Dr. Müller, who ate no less than five portions of it nightly, after his twelve long hours of clinical prodding and hacking. He found it more nourishing, he told me, than pure albumen, and more stimulating to the jaded nerves than laparotomy.

But to many Americans, of course, sauerkraut does not appeal. Prejudiced against the dish by ridicule and innuendo, they are unable to differentiate between good and bad, and so it's useless to send them to this or that *ausschank*. Well, let them then go to the Pschorrbräu and order bifstek from the grill, at M. 1.20 the ration. There may be tenderer and more savory bifsteks in the world, bifsteks which sizzle more seductively upon red hot plates, bifsteks with more proteids and manganese in them, bifsteks more humane to ancient and hyperesthetic teeth, bifsteks from nobler cattle, more deftly cut, more passionately grilled more romantically served—but not, believe me, for M. 1.20! Think of it: a cut of tenderloin for M. 1.20—say, 28.85364-273+ cents! For a side order of sauerkraut, forty pfennigs extra. For potatoes, twenty-five pfennigs. For a *mass* of *dunkle*, thirty-two pfennigs. In all, M. 2.17—an odd mill or so more or less than fifty-two cents. A square meal, perfectly cooked, washed down with perfect beer and served perfectly by Fräulein Tilde—and all for the price of a shampoo!

From the Pschorrbräu, if the winds be fair, the beeriad takes us westward along the Neuhauserstrasse a distance of eighty feet and six inches, and behold, we are at the Augustinerbräu. Good beer—a trifle pale, perhaps, and without much grip to it, but still good beer. After all, how-

ever, there is something lacking here. Or, to be more accurate, something jars. The orchestra plays Grieg and Moszkowski; a smell of chocolate is in the air; that tall, pink lieutenant over there, with his cropped head and his outstanding ears, his *backfisch* waist and his mud-scow feet—that military gargoyle, half lout and half fop, offends the roving eye. No doubt a handsome man, by German standards—even, perhaps, a celebrated seducer, a soldier with a future—but the mere sight of him suffices to paralyze an American esophagus. Besides, there is the smell of chocolate, sweet, sickly, effeminate, and at two in the afternoon! Again, there is the music of Grieg, clammy, clinging, creepy. Away to the Mathäserbräu, two long blocks by taxi! From the Munich of Berlinish decadence and Prussian epaulettes to the Munich of honest Bavarians! From chocolate and macaroons to pretzels and white radishes! From Grieg to "Lachende Liebe"! From a boudoir to an inn yard! From pale beer in fragile glasses to red beer in earthen pots!

The Mathäserbräu is up a narrow alley, and that alley is always full of Müncheners going in. Follow the crowd, and one comes presently to a row of booths set up by radish sellers—ancient dames of incredible diameter, gnarled old peasants in tapestry waistcoats and country boots; veterans, one half ventures, of the Napoleonic wars, even of the wars of Frederick the Great. A ten-pfennig piece buys a noble white radish, and the seller slices it free of charge, slices it with a little revolving blade into twoscore thin schnitzels, and puts salt between each adjacent pair. A radish so sliced and salted is the perfect complement of this dark Mathäser beer. One nibbles and drinks, drinks and nibbles, and so slides the lazy afternoon. The scene is an incredible, playhouse courtyard, with shrubs in tubs and tables painted scarlet: a fit setting for the first act of "Manon." But instead of choristers in short skirts, tripping the whoopla and boosting the landlord's wine, one feasts the eye upon Münchenses of a rhinoceros fatness, dropsical and gargantuan creatures, bison in skirts, who

pass laboriously among the bibuli, offering bunches of little pretzels strung upon red strings. Six pretzels for ten pfennigs. A five-pfennig tip for Frau Dickleibig, and she brings you the *Fliegende Blätter*, *Le Réve*, the Munich or Berlin papers, whatever you want. A drowsy, hedonistic, easy-going place. Not much talk, not much rattling of crockery, not much card playing. The mountain, one guesses, of Munich meditation. The incubator of Munich *gemütlichkeit*.

Upstairs there is the big Mathäser hall, with room for three thousand visitors of an evening, a great resort for Bavarian high privates and their best girls, the scene of honest and public courting. Between the Bavarian high private and the Bavarian lieutenant all the differences are in favor of the former. He wears no corsets, he is innocent of the monocle, he sticks to native beer. A man of amour like his officer, he disdains the elaborate winks, the complex *diableries* of that superior being, and confines himself to open hugging. One sees him, in these great beer halls, with his arm around his Lizzie. Anon he arouses himself from his coma of love to offer her a sip from his *mass* or to whisper some bovine nothing into her ear. Before they depart for the evening he escorts her to the huge sign, "*Für Damen*," and waits patiently while she goes in and fixes her mussed hair.

The Bavarians have no false pruderies, no nasty little nicenesses. There is, indeed, no race in Europe more innocent, more frank, more clean-minded. Postcards of a homely and harmless vulgarity are for sale in every Munich stationer's shop, but the connoisseur looks in vain for the studied indecencies of Paris, the appalling obscenities of the Swiss towns. Munich has little to show the American Sunday school superintendent on the loose. The ideal there is not a sharp and stinging deviltry, a swift massacre of all the commandments, but a liquid and tolerant geniality, a great forgiveness. Beer does not refine, perhaps, but at any rate it mellows. No Münchener ever threw a stone.

And so, passing swiftly over the Burgerbräu in the Kaufingerstrasse, the

Hackerbräu, the Kreuzbräu, and the Kochelbräu all hospitable *lokale*, selling pure beer in honest measures; and over the various Pilsener fountains and the agency for Vienna beer—dishwatery stuff!—in the Maximilianstrasse; and over the various summer *keller* on the heights of Au and Haidhausen across the river, with their spacious terraces and their ancient traditions—passing over all these tempting sanctuaries of *mass* and *kellnerin*, we arrive finally at the Löwenbräukeller and the Hofbräuhaus, which is quite a feat of arriving, it must be granted, for the one is in the Nymphenburgerstrasse, in Northwest Munich, and the other is in the Platzl, not two blocks from the royal palace, and the distance from the one to the other is a good mile and a half.

The Löwenbräu first—a rococo castle sprawling over a whole city block, and with accommodations in its “halls, galleries, loges, verandas, terraces, outlying garden promenades and beer rooms” (I quote the official guide) for eight thousand drinkers. A lordly and impressive establishment is this Löwenbräu, an edifice of countless towers, buttresses, minarets and dungeons. It was designed by the learned Prof. Albert Schmidt, one of the creators of modern Munich, and when it was opened, on June 14, 1883, all the military bands in Munich played at once in the great hall, and the royal family of Bavaria turned out in state coaches, and 100,000 eager Müncheners tried to fight their way in.

How large that great hall may be I don't know, but I venture to guess that it seats four thousand people—not huddled together, as a theater seats them, but comfortably, loosely, spaciouly, with plenty of room between the tables for the 250 *kellnerin* to navigate safely with their cargoes of Löwenbräu. Four nights a week a military band plays in this hall or a *männerchor* rowels the air with song, and there is an admission fee of thirty pfennigs (7½ cents). One night I heard the band of the Second Bavarian (Crown Prince's) Regiment, playing as an orchestra, go through a program that would have done credit to the New York Philharmonic. A young

violinist in corporal's stripes lifted the crowd to its feet with the slow movement of the Tchaikowsky concerto; the band itself began with Wagner's “Siegfried Idyl” and ended with Strauss's “Rosen aus dem Süden,” a superb waltz, magnificently performed. Three hours of first rate music for 7½ cents! And a *mass* of Löwenbräu, twice the size of the *seidel* sold in this country at twenty cents, for forty pfennigs (9½ cents)! An inviting and appetizing spot, believe me. A place to stretch your legs. A temple of Lethe. There, when my days of moneylust are over, I go to chew my memories and dream my dreams and listen to my arteries hardening.

By taxicab down the wide Briennerrstrasse, past the Luitpold and the Odéon, to the Ludwigstrasse, gay with its after-the-opera crowds, and then to the left into the Residenzstrasse, past the Hoftheater and its café (ah, Sophie, thou angel!), and so to the Maximilianstrasse, to the Neuthurmstrasse, and at last, with a sharp turn, into the Platzl.

The Hofbräuhaus! One hears it from afar: a loud buzzing, the rattle of *mass* lids, the sputter of the released *dunkle*, the sharp cries of pretzel and radish sellers, the scratching of matches, the shuffling of feet, the eternal gurgling of the plain people. No palace this, for all its towering battlements and the frescos by Ferdinand Wagner in the great hall upstairs, but drinking butts for them that labor and are heavy laden: station porters, teamsters, servant girls, soldiers, bricklayers, blacksmiths, tanners, sweeps.

There sits the fair lady who gathers cigar stumps from the platz in front of the Bayerischer Hof, still in her green hat of labor, but now with an earthen cylinder of Hofbräu in her hands. The gentleman beside her, obviously wooing her, is third fireman at the same hotel. At the next table, a squad of yokels just in from the oberland, in their short jackets and their hobnailed boots. Beyond, a noisy meeting of Socialists, a rehearsal of some *liedertafel*, a family reunion of four generations, a beer party of gay young bloods from the gas works, a conference of the executive committee of the horse butchers' union. Every

second drinker has brought his lunch wrapped in a newspaper: half a *blutwurst*, two radishes, an onion, a heel of rye bread. The debris of such lunches covers the floor. One wades through escaped beer, among floating islands of radish top and newspaper. Children go overboard and are succored with shouts. Leviathans of this underground lake, *Lusitanias* of beer, Pantagruels of the Hofbräuhaus, collide, draw off, collide again and are wrecked in the narrow channels. . . . A great puffing and blowing. Stranded craft on every bench. . . . Noses like cigar bands.

No waitresses here. Each drinker for himself! You go to the long shelf, select your *mass*, wash it at the spouting faucet and fall into line. Behind the rail the *zahlmeister* takes your twenty-eight pfennigs and pushes your *mass* along the counter. Then the perspiring *bierbischof* fills it from the naked keg, and you carry it to the table of your choice, or drink it standing up and at one suffocating gulp, or take it out into the yard, to wrestle with it beneath the open sky. Roughnecks enter eternally with fresh kegs; the thud of the mallet never ceases; the rude clamor of the bung-starter is as the rattle of departing time itself. Huge damsels in dirty aprons—retired *kellnerin*, too bulky, even, for that trade of human battleships—go among the tables rescuing empty *mäße*. Each *mass* returns to the shelf and begins another circuit of faucet, counter and table. A dame so fat that she must remain permanently at anchor—the venerable *Constitution* of this fleet!—bawls postcards and matches. A man in *pince-nez*, a decadent doctor of philosophy, sells pale German cigars at three for ten pfennigs. Here we are among the plain people. They believe in Karl Marx, *blutwurst* and the Hofbräuhaus. They speak a German that is half speech and half grunt. One passes them to windward and enters the yard.

A brighter scene. A cleaner, greener land. In the center a circular fountain; on four sides the medieval gables of the old beerhouse; here and there a barrel on end, to serve as table. The yard is most

gay on a Sunday morning, when thousands stop on their way to church—not only Socialists and servant girls, remember, but also solemn gentlemen in plug hats and frock coats, students in their polychrome caps and in all the glory of their astounding duelling scars, citizens' wives in holiday finery. The fountain is a great place for gossip. One rests one's *mass* on the stone coping and engages one's nearest neighbor. He has a cousin who is brewmaster of the largest brewery in Zanesville, Ohio. Is it true that all the policemen in America are convicts? That some of the skyscrapers have more than twenty stories? What a country! And those millionaire Socialists! Imagine a rich man denouncing riches! And then, "*Grüss' Gott!*"—and the pots clink. A kindly, hospitable, tolerant folk, these Bavarians! "*Grüss' Gott!*"—"the compliments of God." What other land has such a greeting for strangers?

On May day all Munich goes to the Hofbräuhaus to "prove" the new bock. I was there last May in company with a Virginian weighing 190 pounds. He wept with joy when he smelled that heavenly brew. It had the coppery glint of old Palernian, the pungent bouquet of good port, the acrid grip of English ale, and the bubble and bounce of good champagne. A beer to drink reverently and silently, as if in the presence of something transcendental, ineffable—but not too slowly, for the supply is limited! One year it ran out in thirty hours and there were riots from the Max-Joseph-Platz to the Isar. But last May day there was enough and to spare—enough, at all events, to last until the Virginian and I gave up, at high noon of May 3. The Virginian went to bed at the Bayrischer Hof at 12.30, leaving a call for 4 P.M. of May 5.

Ah, the Hofbräuhaus! A massive and majestic shrine, the Parthenon of beer drinking, seductive to virtuosi, fascinating to the connoisseur, but a bit too strenuous, a trifle too cruel, perhaps, for the dilettante. The Münchener love it as hillmen love the hills. There every one of them returns, soon or late.

There he takes his children, to teach them his hereditary art. There he takes his old grandfather, to say farewell to the world. There, when he has passed out himself, his pallbearers in their gauds of grief will stop to refresh themselves, and to praise him in speech and song, and to weep unashamed for the loss of so *gemüthlich* a fellow.

But, as I have said, the Hofbräuhaus is no playroom for amateurs. My advice to you, if you would sip the cream of Munich and leave the hot acids and lye, is that you have yourself hauled forthwith to the Hoftheater Café, and

that you there tackle a modest seidel of Spatenbräu—first one, and then another, and so on until you master the science.

And all that I ask in payment for that tip—the most valuable, perhaps, you have ever got from the magazines—is that you make polite inquiry of the Herr Wirt regarding Fräulein Sophie, and that you present to her, when she comes tripping to your table, the respects and compliments of one who forgets not her cerulean eyes, her swanlike glide, her Mona Lisa smile and her leucemic and superbly manicured hands!



FAITH

By Archibald Sullivan

I HAVE not met you, still I see your eyes
In all the silent sapphire of the sea;
I have not kissed you, but each crimson rose
Turns, as I pass, your scented lips to me.

I have not held you prisoner in my arms,
But each soft cloud that woos the sun to rest
Seems but my arm across the evening sky,
Drawing your golden head against my breast.

And shall we ever meet? Or has fate set
Between our love sad days like prison bars?
Still, in that great beyond, you will await
My tears and kisses 'mid the trembling stars.



HE—Do you like my mustache?
SHE—Yes; it's a pleasure that grows on one.



A MARRIAGE certificate is one of reasonable doubt.

IN THE COOL OF THE EVENING

By Witter Bynner

EVE—**B**UT tell me, Adam, while I watch your face
Turned to the moon and me, when have we seen
The God who made us and who made this place?
We say we love him . . . Tell me what we mean.

ADAM—I have not seen him. But the thunderclap
Is his right hand, I think, holding the sword
Of lightning. When the trees are running sap,
My veins are running fire before the Lord.

EVE—Can that be love which never sees or knows,
Which thinks it counts the deadly thunder dear
And feels vague passion when the spring sap flows,
But cannot tell its rapture from its fear?

ADAM—I have less fear of God than if you drew
His lightning . . . If he added to my store
Of fruits for loving him and stinted you
For doubting him, then I should love him more.

EVE—The fruits are for us both. And as they spring
From one another, so creation grows
And teaches us that every living thing
Is ours to know as the creator knows.

ADAM—See how the tree with lightning shakes, to shame /
And punish us! For this is his land, Eve,
Which he prepared for us before we came,
And we are nourished only by his leave.

EVE—Then let us go outside! Let us rejoice
To find with our own hands new bread and wine
And our own love each in the other's voice! . . .
. . . How I have quieted your mouth with mine!

ADAM—But how can we succeed, beginning late?
Water and meat are here, and grapes and corn,
And there is nothing further to create;
The world is made—and you and I are born.

EVE—He is but one! And, Adam, we are two!
Let us remake the world and take the rod!
So let our fire, filling my life with you
And yours with me, create a greater God!

JESSICA SCREAMS

By Floyd Dell

NO premonitory vision of Jessica flashed on Jimmy Selden's mind as he tore open Murray Swift's letter. "Come down to Hazelton," it said, "and see me masquerading as a high school principal. I finished my series of one-act plays while I was in Vienna, despite some delightful interruptions, and I have an unpublished poem I think you will be interested in, in your academic, sociological way. Come at once, for Hazelton bores me, and I wish to talk of myself. Hazelton, by the way, is in Indiana. I'll have some real cigarettes for you, and some apricot brandy that pleases me. Very well, then, I'll look for you."

Selden dropped the letter, and with a sigh started to pack a suitcase. Murray Swift's invitations were irresistible. Yet, as he left hurriedly to catch his train, he cast a pathetic look at his bookcases, full of the sociological books with which he improved his leisure. His eye caught the title of a book by Walter E. Weyl. It was symbolic, that volume of cheerful progressivism, of all that he was leaving. To go to Murray Swift was to turn his back on civic responsibility and venture into the wilds of human nature. The City Club bulletin there on the table had a reproachful look. He shut the door with a feeling that he was playing truant.

But Selden possessed the instincts of the disciple, and he had perforce for Murray Swift the reverence, mixed with astonishment and disapproval, which one might feel for a particularly disreputable minor prophet. It was in this attitude that he greeted Murray Swift—now half disguised by a little beard—at the station in Hazelton that evening, and

listened to his characteristic flood of talk, half reminiscence and half philosophy, an astonishing mixture of personalities and generalities, until they reached the old house, standing imposingly back in a large yard, where Murray Swift said he lived.

"I am quartered here at the home of Judge Wyman. A justice of the peace; a funny, solemn old gander. Come on up."

On the stairs they passed a young girl in a blue sailor suit. She smiled at Murray Swift, and demanded: "You're coming, aren't you?"

"Coming? Yes, yes. I forgot all about it."

They all paused on the stairs, and Selden looked curiously at the girl, while Murray Swift after a fashion introduced them, telling him that she was the daughter of the house and one of his pupils. Her gaze burned at Selden eagerly for a moment, and then smoldered into indifference; and Selden, half awakened to some individual quality in her, turned again and looked down at her as she descended the stairs. But all he saw was the familiar appearance of a girl of fifteen with ribbons in her hair—the ordinary young girl as he had always known her.

Murray Swift hardly gave him a sight of his room, transformed, as he transformed every place he inhabited, into a villainous hole, with a litter of manuscript, notes, letters, accounts, books, newspapers, spilt tobacco and burnt matches. "We can talk tonight," said Swift, putting on a fresh collar. "It is part of the duty of a Hazelton high school principal to be present at such affairs"—it was a school party, it seemed

—"and besides I like it. I am getting acquainted with America. It is only in a town with ten thousand inhabitants and a red brick high school that one can really see the character of the American people. It should be a great thing for an amateur sociologist like you. To-night you will see—"

"I grew up in a small town," said Jimmy Selden drily.

"Yes, of course; and therefore never regarded with curiosity any of its phenomena. Curiosity is the corkscrew that makes a man free of the wine of life."

They started down the stairs. "I swear to you," said Murray Swift, taking his friend's arm, "that in the month I have been here I have not seen an extreme of any kind. No—I am mistaken. There is an Anarchist here—the man who keeps the jewelry store. There will be no jewelry, he assured me, the day after the Revolution. I fear he is not a good Anarchist. A mere reformer, like you. And there is a dance hall here, where I am told very scandalous scenes occur. I have not yet had time to investigate."

Somewhat out of breath with talking, Murray Swift guided his friend into the school yard. On their way up to the assembly room they passed on the stairs groups of young people who spoke to Murray Swift respectfully, as though he were a real high school principal. The assembly room itself, with its garniture of colored tissue paper festoons and a fantastic decoration in red and green chalk on the blackboard, had an air of pathetic gaiety. A few adults scattered among the younger people kept the occasion from assuming any specific quality, and it languished between ceremony and festivity.

Selden looked about for Jessica Wyman, but he did not see her. On the teacher's desk he noted a pile of "boxes," now being auctioned off. It was a rather spiritless attempt to revive an old-fashioned "box social," but every young man seemed gloomily certain of getting the box belonging to the wrong girl. Deserted by Swift, who seemed to have some official duties in

connection with this affair, Selden reconciled himself to the idea of sharing a box supper with one of those strange and discomforting creatures whom he had forgotten how to talk to. But, to his relief, he drew a fat and jolly widow, who conversed with him as one sensible human being with another.

But when he had run out of things to talk about he began to feel bored. The hum of talk, so different in its rhythm from that in a restaurant with its clustered group egotisms unconscious of each other—this subdued, half-embarrassed, ineffectual attempt at conversation wearied him. The festoons looked jaded; the room seemed to have given up hope for its occupants. Selden looked over to where Swift was standing apart, pulling at his little black beard and seeming to enjoy his sheer lack of enjoyment.

And then there burst out of the cloakroom—followed by a puff of girlish laughter, like the smoke that follows the bullet—Jessica Wyman, seeming in that moment very young and bold and full of life, as, in tune with some florid music that came from a mouth harp in the cloakroom, she became a wild, whirling, twisting, fantastic figure, executing some curious combination of the steps of the latest dances. Selden, staring, recognized the peculiar movements of the "tango," the strut of the "turkey trot," a suggestion of the "bear" and a recurrent reminiscence of the "Boston" whirl.

She tossed her arms, she swayed to and fro, she glided and writhed, abandoning her body to a vehement and rhythmical orgy of muscular expression.

The electric lights flickered, the steam pipes began to sing, and one giddy festoon in pure joy lost its hold and fell to the floor. Murray Swift stepped back out of the way, staring with a kind of delighted dismay. But on the rest of the company there fell a silence that was not the silence of appreciation. The girl danced her way across the front of the room, too full of her own pleasure to notice how it was being taken. But when she started her backward return to the cloakroom, she looked and saw. The

pleasure went out of her eyes. Her steps faltered, and after a little effort to hold herself steady to the end, she broke down, and ran swiftly to the cloakroom.

Murray Swift was after her in an instant, and led her out as the baritone might the prima donna. The cue was taken, and the room applauded, but it was applause with a moral reservation in it. "Very clever, but—" it seemed to say.

Selden followed with his eyes as Murray Swift, talking earnestly, escorted her to a seat. She was very quiet now, and Selden noted her black hair and high cheek bones. She seemed like almost any fifteen-year-old girl, demure and quiet in the presence of her elders. That burst of dionysiac energy which she had shown a moment since seemed foreign to her.

On the way home, Murray Swift talked exclusively to her—he had sent her official beau packing, and bade her come home with him and Selden. It was curious talk for the most part, strangely impersonal.

"You belong," he told her, "to the middle class, and to the middle part of that. I haven't discovered the aristocracy here in Hazelton yet, but at least it gives its daughters tennis and horseback riding. And the girls at the other end of the social scale can go to that dance hall. But the daughter of Judge Wyman can't go. The fact is, you are extraordinarily hedged in. And you happen to be the sort of girl whose superabundant energies demand unusual freedom.

"Of course, you could ride a bicycle, or go rowing, or get up amateur theatricals; but unless you were given a sort of social permission to do these things heartily, wantonly, gloriously, they would be spoiled for you. Besides, you have a specific talent. You have a right to dance."

The girl brightened up at that last sentence, and put her hand confidently in the crook of his arm. Suddenly Selden stopped short.

"Wait a minute," he said. "Why not sit down a while?"

They had arrived at a tiny park, with

benches scattered here and there beside the walks. It was warm for October, and the moonlight turned the spot of greensward into a place to linger in. They strolled over to a bench.

"I now begin to understand," said Murray Swift to his friend, "why you are called Jimmy instead of James. I have been unjust to you in my thoughts. I should have thought of this myself. Sometimes I fear that I am a mere theorist, after all."

As they sat down, Murray Swift turned to the girl. Her face took on in the moonlight an unwonted maturity of expression—it seemed to express the weariness of her soul with its continual failure to find expression. "Suppose," Murray Swift suddenly said to her, "I were to make love to you." She smiled. "If you were a year or two older," he said, "I'd do it. But no—you are too carefully brought up."

"I have held hands," said Jessica candidly. "It's rather silly, isn't it?"

Murray Swift, taken rather aback, replied: "No, it is not that. I assure you it is not that. It is merely the banality of the Hazelton male, which made it seem so. I congratulate you on making a start. You will find it interesting if properly cultivated. I advise you this in all sincerity. It is true that there are many other interesting things for a girl of your temperament to do, but you will not find any of them in Hazelton. That is your chief resource. Do not despise it."

Jessica was yawning. Murray Swift did not notice, absorbed as he was in talking.

"You are," he said, "what is sometimes called a tomboy. You are so unfortunate as to be neither rich nor poor, which means that you are a suppressed tomboy. You are living in a country which at best only tolerates tomboys, and at worst exploits them brutally."

Selden was looking at her, and seeing her with sharpened sight. Her black eyes, over which the eyelids drooped with languor, her petulant red mouth, were indeed the features of a child; but the mouth was just touched with a curious shade of sophistication, and the eyes had

a faint expression in them of knowledge, rather than the wells of unplumbed ignorance which are childhood's. Selden looked at her face, with its high cheek bones, and the careless black hair that shaded it, at her young body that had just begun in bosom and thighs to take on the outlines of maturity, and it seemed to him that he was learning something about the "young girl" that he had never known before. He saw a strange compound, an unstable mixture of all the dangerous elements of childhood with a new and not less dangerous, though slighter, element of sex. In her blue sailor suit, with her girlish hair and pouting lips, she entered his imagination.

"Jessica," asked Murray Swift, "how, exactly, does Hazelton make you feel?"

"I want to scream," said Jessica. "*To scream!*" she repeated in a fierce whisper.

"Selden," said Murray Swift, "you and I were never made to set things right. But this girl here, whom you doubtless regard as a child, is plainly different. She will do something. It will not succeed. No, it will not succeed. But it will be a reproach to me and to you, who do nothing—who do nothing but talk. But she is yawning! Come, let us go home."

On the way home, he said: "Jessica, I accept your rebuke. I talk too much. But I shall do something. I shall write a poem subversive of the morals of Hazelton."

"This is where I live," said Jessica drily, as they reached her front gate. They went in silence up the walk, and into the house. At the foot of the stairs she bade Selden good night, smiled a faint and possibly satirical smile at Murray Swift, and disappeared.

"Now," said Swift. "I want to show you that poem of mine. Sit over there on the couch. Here are the cigarettes."

Selden left the next morning, and did not see Jessica again until the next summer. He and Swift were at an amusement park in Chicago, where Swift—having been "fired" from his position in Hazelton—was loafing. It was a June afternoon—Sunday. Selden and Murray Swift had just come out of the smoke and roar of a "naval battle," when they

passed what appeared to be a new "attraction." A small building had just been put up, and was not yet painted. Swift was halted by the appearance of a woman in the doorway—a fat woman, dressed as an Oriental dancer—and by the familiar and curiously alluring music which accompanies such dancing. He quickly bought tickets, and pushed Selden in.

The hall was packed; the aisles were full of standing people, and many stood on their seats. As they pushed their way to a place where they could see, they caught glimpses of a girl dressed in red, with multitudinous red petticoats, whirling on the stage, and heard some young women of the audience who were standing near the stage applaud and cheer her familiarly. There was a good-natured flavor to the affair that could be sensed instantly. When, under Swift's energetic leadership, they reached the front, a man in Russian peasant costume, blue blouse and heavy boots, was doing a kind of dance in which he almost sat on the floor, throwing out his legs in a miraculous and very ugly fashion.

In a few moments this ended, and the show was over. Those who had not seen all the performance were invited to remain for the next period. As the audience filed out, Swift and Selden selected front row seats. Several people, dressed in more or less Oriental-looking garb, came out of a little door beside the stage and started toward the outside. There was the fat woman whose fleshly promise had drawn them within. There was the man in the boots, now wearing a kind of Greek costume and carrying a drum. There was the villainous-looking Hindoo (or what you will) that they had seen outside taking tickets—all of the teeth in his wide and wicked mouth were of gold. Then came a man with a clarinet, or some such instrument; his affectation of the Orient did not go so far as to make him dispense with suspenders—he wore them along with a red sash. Then came a girl who looked like a department store clerk, with her ultra-large mass of puffs jutting back from her head; she wore a wine-colored dress and carried a tambourine.

Following came the girl in red whom they had briefly seen before the curtain went down. All filed out to the entrance. And then, a little behind the rest, and running to catch up, came Jessica.

Decked out in tawdry Oriental finery, with a short skirt which showed the calves of her legs, a flush on her face under those high cheek bones, her black hair cut across the front to make an Egyptian bang, a laugh breaking from her throat, she was—though transformed—unmistakably Jessica.

She saw them, stopped with a glad laugh, and said: "Hello, hello! Say, come back and see me, will you? Soon as I get back. Bye-bye!" She waved at them, turned and dashed out through the entrance.

Selden looked at Swift.

"Well, I'll be damned!" Swift said.

"Well, what about this?" Selden demanded. "When did she leave Hazelton, and why?"

"Oh, she's been gone two or three months. She left shortly before I did. Disappeared."

"What!"

"Yes. Disappeared on her way to Indianapolis. And this is where she is! Well!"

The girls were being shown off outside, as, with faintly suggestive movements, and to "hoochee-coochee" music, they adumbrated the dances which would occur within. The house was filling rapidly.

"Good God!" cried Selden.

"Now don't be a fool," said Swift.

"Wait and see what there is to see. Then make up your mind. Remember what I was going to tell her—that whatever she did would be right, even if it was wrong. This is what she's done. Let's take a good look at it before we make up our minds."

Selden was thinking of the girl in the blue sailor suit there in that peaceful Hazelton house—of her standing there, bidding him good night at the foot of the stairs. She was only a child—she looked to be hardly seventeen even now. And here in such a place as this!

"Wait!" said Swift, noting his expression. "Don't be a fool."

The seats were all full, but it seemed that they wanted to pack the aisles. The Hindoo outside exhorted the crowd; the girls—they could get glimpses of them through the curtained doorway—wriggled to the music. The band came inside, the fat lady appeared and disappeared, and the crowd filtered in.

"Ee-yah! Ee-ahh! E-yahh-ee!"

The man with the drum was yelling—a yell of a piece with the music. A woman's voice took it up. "Ee-yah-ee! Ah-ee!"

Then came Jessica's voice, high, shrill, youthful, full of a strange sincerity and enthusiasm: "Ah! Ee-ah! Ee-ah!"

"Nobody ever got paid for yelling like that," said Swift. And then, as if to himself: "She wanted to scream."

That sound seemed more than anything else to excite the crowd outside, and the people began to pour in. Selden and Swift looked at the audience about them. This was composed of all kinds of people—young girls of eighteen, school teachers, middle-aged women, women with white hair, men of every age—all having in their eyes a kind of candid curiosity and expectation—all eager for some erotic spectacle, and seeming frankly to admit it to each other by their smiles. Selden noted a very large German woman, beaming good nature, in the middle of the front row. Her distinguished-looking husband, leaning on a gold-headed cane, looked about at everybody, and whispered witticisms in her ear, at which she laughed helplessly. A few rows back a young mother was nursing her baby at her breast. Two girls in the row behind pierced the lowered curtain with intense looks.

This new audience, like the last, seemed imbued with good nature. It exchanged merry glances and smiles. It applauded and stamped, all in good humor. And above all the din of clapping and stamping, of drum and tambourine and clarinet, and of the damnable iteration outside, rose the girl's yells, more and more prolonged: "Ah! Ee-ah!"

She was standing just inside the entrance, looking out as through a peephole; her profile was clearly outlined,

and showed a wide-open—oh, so wide-open—mouth, from which proceeded with unflinching zest this intoxicating scream, filled with the suggestion of unimaginable erotic violence. And yet it was not histrionic—it was noise for its own sake, for the sake of fun, as her face showed. She turned and struck pettishly at the man with the drum, who had been speaking slyly to her. Then she lifted her head, and her throat swelled and her bosom expanded under the volume of sound that burst forth in a last cry which might have been the primitive exultation of a young giantess. Then she ran down the aisle, past their seats, and up the steps into the dressing room. Swift was on her heels in a moment, and Selden followed. Once inside, she hailed them again, very eagerly, and then seemed to grow a little embarrassed. "So this is what you did!" said Swift. "Well, I've left Hazelton, too."

"See here," she said, looking from one to the other with a confident appeal. "You're not going to tell the folks in Hazelton, are you?"

"This man here thinks he ought to," said Swift. "But don't worry."

She turned to Selden with a look that was an assurance of complete trust in him. "You won't tell," she said, putting her hands on his shoulders.

"Here," said Swift, removing her hands, one after the other, "no fair seducing him. Let your life speak for itself."

She laughed. "I guess it does speak for itself!"

"You look happy," Selden suggested uncertainly.

She drew a breath, and stretched out her arms, and her face broke into that look they had seen on it while she was yelling—that look of glorious fun. She dropped her arms and nodded. "Yes," she said.

The drum stopped beating outside. "Here they come. It's about to start," she whispered.

"But what about these people?" Selden demanded.

"Oh, they're all right. I don't like that black devil out there on the platform, but the others are good fun.

Yusuf is a picnic, except when he's drunk—he's the man with the drum. Steve is nice, too. Bertha is a fool. And that fat old Fatima—" She made a face.

At that moment these people began to climb the stairs into the dressing room, with the exception of the black devil, who remained outside. Yusuf glared at the strangers, and the man who must by elimination be Steve looked them over critically. Steve was a lean-faced New Englander. The little room was furnished with a mirror, a chair and an unpainted kitchen table, on which lay some boxes of cosmetics; on the wall and on the floor, too, were clothes, men's and women's; the little company could scarcely all be contained in so small a space.

Jessica said, "See you later," and motioned them out.

The girl in red, to whom Jessica had given no name or comment, had lifted her skirts to adjust something, and Selden glimpsed again her scarlet underclothing as they backed out.

Their seats were gone, but they were in front. The curtain went up, showing a mongrel Turko-Greek room, with a divan, on the middle of which, her lips parted in the gayest of smiles, sat Jessica—a Sultan's favorite, no doubt. On chairs ranged against the side wall sat Yusuf, with his boots and drum, and Steve, in suspenders and red sash, holding his clarinet. On a sort of stool in the corner was Bertha, with her department store puffs and her vacuous look, a tambourine in her lap.

Yusuf raised his drumsticks, Steve put the clarinet to his lips, and Bertha lifted her tambourine. And as these all broke into music, there pranced into the room that great fat woman whom they had first noticed at the door.

Afterward they understood what Jessica meant by calling her Fatima. It was stated on the posters outside that she was the original St. Louis Exposition Turkish dancer. Probably she was. (It was also stated outside that the show was "strictly moral and clean, refined—ladies and children invited.") But the St. Louis Exposition was some years ago.

It was the coarsened relic of that Turkish dancer, coarsened and augmented, that they saw before them. She was a skillful muscle dancer, and the rhythmic waves of muscle that rippled and danced over her shapeless body were impressive in one way; but if (as Swift would have pointed out) there is anything in this world which may legitimately be erotic, it is the *danse du ventre*; and a fat woman, by the mere exaggeration of these various features of her sex, may seem in such a dance the very expression of it: but this woman was so swathed in fat that it seemed no sex remained in her.

She stood almost still, a mass of undulating fat and muscle. The audience looked at her with a mingling of curiosity and derision. The music sounded wildly beside her, and on the divan behind, the girl with the high cheek bones, the little black-eyed bride of the Sultan, opened a red mouth and cried in a high voice that seemed to have in it an accent of mockery:

"*La Belle Fatima! La Belle Fatima!*"

After that dance was finished, and *La Belle Fatima* had gone into the dressing room—and thence to the front door, to eclipse her own posters—the girl jumped down from the divan, ran to the front of the little stage and commenced to dance the same dance to the same music.

She did not have a tithe of the skill of the older woman, but she had a beautiful body, and she mixed the magic of sex with the abandon of youth. Her dance was an effulgent giving of herself to her audience. And when at last, in a sort of rhythmic paroxysm, she shook her torso with a violent motion that transmitted itself to her young breasts, she turned what should have seemed an ugliness into a symbol of sexuality that intoxicated the audience. She saw her triumph, and exulted in it—but exulted with a kind of wild sexless mirth, the sheer mad effrontery of youth.

Her dance was over. Bertha was there in the center of the stage. As the music started, she whirled rapidly around—and the audience shouted with laughter, at the sight of an extraordinarily large pair of legs. From the ankles up they broadened amazingly. Selden

stared a moment at them, and then he saw Jessica come down the steps from the dressing room and dart out the side door, with a glance at him and Swift.

They found her just outside, standing on the little strip of green that separated the little building from the snake charmer's tent next door. Selden was perturbed. He still had the impulse to seize her and crush her in his arms. She turned to him, searching his face with bold eyes. What she saw there seemed to satisfy her, for she turned to Swift.

"And you?" she demanded. "What do you think?"

"I'm wondering," said Swift. "In a way I'm responsible for this. I remember that I told you—"

She went up close to him. "You won't tell on me, will you?" she asked.

"Suppose I did?" parried Swift.

"I know," said the girl, with a glance that made plain her meaning. "You want to be paid for being good. All right, then, be around here"—her voice was very low—"tonight when we close up." She stepped back. "I've got to go out in front now. Good-bye!"

The two young men sustained that disturbing glance, full of the blazing audacity of youth, and shot through with the allure of sex, for a moment, and then she was gone.

"Well," said Selden, "you've made a hit with her. I wish you a pleasant evening!"

"I'm going home," announced Swift, "and rewrite that chapter. I've just got an idea." And he started off.

So Jimmy Selden did not know what Murray Swift had done until two weeks later, when they met again, and Swift told him. Then he was aghast. "You fool!" he cried. "You Judas!"

For Murray Swift, sick at heart, had telegraphed Jessica's father. That night she slept in the police station. A few days later she was sent to an "institution" where girls are reformed by being made to work in a laundry for ten hours a day, together with religious instruction. Jessica's father had followed the expert advice of the police matron and the police magistrate, and hoped to see her emerge a "good girl."

"You betrayed her to them?" cried Selden. "You?"

"I tell you," Murray Swift sadly protested, "that she offered to go with me to a hotel!"

Jimmy Selden interrupted him.

"Yes," he said, "of course she did. She wanted to be left alone, and all she had to offer was that. And, by God, you would have done better to take up her offer—than do what you did. I tell you it would have been better!"



MORNING GLORIES

By John G. Neihardt

DISTANT as a dream's flight,
Lay an eerie plain,
Where the weary moonlight
Swooned into a moan;
Wailing after dead seed
Came the ghost of rain.
There was I, a wild weed,
Growing all alone.

Like a doubted story,
Came the thought of day;
God and all His glory
Lingered elsewhere,
Busy with the spring thrill
Many dreams away.
Could a little weed's will
Fling so far a prayer?

Lo, the sudden wonder!
(Is a prayer so fleet?)
From the desert under,
Morning glories grew;
Twined me, bound me
With caressing feet;
Wove song 'round me—
Pink, white, blue!

As a fog is rifted
By the eager breeze,
Darkness broke and lifted,
Tossing like a sea!
Lo, the dawn was flowering
Through the maple trees!
Oh, and you were showering
Kisses over me!

THE DANCING GIRL OF TLEMGAD

By Bruce Millard

THE present terminus of a line of French railway, which stretches southward through French North Africa, is Tlemgad, lying in an oasis of some miles' diameter, although shown in most geographical works as well within the northern bounds of the Sahara.

Besides a considerable native population, Tlemgad shelters the main rank and file of the First French Legion of the Desert, and is also the rendezvous for the other *indigènes* of the oasis and for many nomadic tribes of the farther Sahara. By reason of all these advantages, the commerce of the place is very attractive; but it has also other attractions, not wholly economic.

Islamism forbids the indiscriminate exhibition of its women; but French rule has done with the manners of its Moslem subjects what it has longer done in the face of native Christianity in France itself.

At Tlemgad, for a period of six months, Haritha had danced in the Café Bisharin, to the never flagging interest of its habitués. In that time, for most of her dances, her costume consisted mainly of a few medallions on a subtle mesh of silken threads, shielding a fine fraction of her natural charms from the garish lights of the place.

Once, for three weeks in the Moslem month of Muharram, which fell in February that year, the French Commandant's wife appeared in state from the Riviera; and the Café Bisharin hastened to fall in line with the other chief cafés of the place, which bid for official patronage, in adapting propriety, if not art, to the current features of the entertainment offered.

But the result was not remunerative

beyond the footlights, except in cementing the Commandant's good will, which of course was valuable; and when Madame Pierrepont at length departed, conscionably satisfied with her visit, the *rakkasat* of Tlemgad's cafés laid aside their improvised costumes and danced again to usual customs and replenished audiences.

There was an incident of some brief anxiety for the Commandant, when, in the *fête* performance of *Dimanche soir*, following and celebrating the arrival of madame his wife, that particularly interested lady had turned to him, in their *loge*, with the remark: "I had heard that the dances of Tlemgad are *quelque peu choquants*."

Haritha had just entered, for her second dance. "One can see how it is," was the Commandant's reply. He proceeded to draw forth and light for himself a fresh cigarette. This latter act, done in apparent *insouciance*, could have been effective only to confirm or subvert suspicion on his wife's part, according as she viewed the situation initially. But she dropped the subject; and the young subaltern, who sat next on her other side, and who had given his attention with hasty detachment to the stage, seized the lull in the conversation to inquire of her as to the season's doings in Monte Carlo.

Haritha herself welcomed the return to the former order of things; and those who witnessed the transition in her art were satisfied it should be so. The tinselled bodice and trunks which she had worn perfunctorily during Madame Pierrepont's visit had impeded the naive nuances of her movements; and although young—barely sixteen—she had seemed

to realize a loss of prestige in the curtailment of her accustomed applause.

For the first time even she thought to ask herself: was she getting old, and to look *passée*, like Ramlah and Zainab and some of the other girls who no longer danced turns but mainly clapped in the chorus? Ah, could it be so—already, so soon? Then in fear, and the scant privacy of her dressing room, that the *loge* spectators on one side could see into, she sought her answer in the big cheval glass, which the occasional presence of French artistes required.

But no, her skin was still as *rose*, her flesh as full—indeed, fuller, than when she had first gazed at herself to her amazement therein. Neither had her face hardened nor furrowed—with its pliable mouth, lifting nostrils and eyes that studied their own image so wistfully; and her hair—ah, that had still the burnished glint of henna, even to the very roots of its exuberant abundance.

Bismillah—but she was forgetting; it was time for her cue. Hastily the street robes fell from her; and when the band leader had given a louder, insistent tap, and crashed his baton to reverberate through the creaking floor a second time, she was on the stage, and from the borrowed energy of her haste danced, as the oldest patron considered, better than the best she had executed before.

The warm blood, that tinged her cheeks' carmine beyond the need of stage cosmetics, and leaped through her tingling frame, light, lithic and beautiful to look upon, as she swayed, and anon seemed to float through the ecstatic convolutions of the dance, fired even the French officers present, who had seen her already so many times, so that they gave instant attention to her art and sat silent; and the Arabs who saw her could think of her face only as surely the pre-carnation of some fairest *houri* of paradise.

St. Croix, who was new in Tlemgad, and making his first attendance at the Café Bisharin, felt the impelling desire to meet Haritha, whose dancing he declared to excel anything he had ever seen—and he had seen much—in or out of Paris, except her own.

He laid this replete commendation, with his request and card, before the manager, who looked at the last named discerningly, recognizing in it the surname of the Minister of War; and then said:

"But it is impossible. Mademoiselle Haritha meets nobody."

"Meets nobody? *Mon Dieu!* It is not possible!" protested the good-looking young Frenchman. "*Regardez-la, maintenant!*"

The lights had been varied to stream only upward from a plank of glass traversing the middle distance of the stage. And, as Haritha danced, in kid-sandaled feet, along this path of light, the effect was to make her noiseless effort weirdly fanciful to the senses, like to the gay wanton of a sprite on a moon-beam.

"Will you have a drink with me?" asked St. Croix, whose interest had been supreme.

"*Merci, bien,*" replied the manager, in the suave French form of unexpressed negation. "She dances yet another hour. The night is young, and there may be others for admission. *Aussi, bien*—I cannot introduce you to Mademoiselle Haritha."

Then, seeing that his auditor looked somewhat crestfallen, he added:

"In the six months that she has danced here, she has arrived each night with an old relative, who also comes for her and departs with her after midnight."

"Ah!" said St. Croix. "I wondered—"

The manager nodded, as if in intelligence of what the other might have said. "No, she is not like the other *rakkasat*."

Henri St. Croix returned to his place near the stage, where twice more Haritha appeared to dance—the last time toward midnight, with the stage in complete eclipse save from the opaque lantern wielded by the band leader *en baton*, when she gave her '*sans rien*' dance, as the playbills advertised it. On the stroke of midnight the stage lights were suddenly turned on; but the trick was that a half-grown negro boy alone held the stage, having in the last moments

taken Haritha's place—and she was gone!

St. Croix, on his second visit to the café, left the building when it came to Haritha's last dance, and found his way to the stage entrance, with whose location he had familiarized himself during the previous daylight. There it was his fortune to come up immediately behind an old Arab on the point of being ushered in.

The old man passed unsuspectingly within, and St. Croix followed.

"With him," he whispered to the doorkeeper, who hesitated, but shut the street door then behind them.

The immediate interior was a dim corridor, but the old Arab bore straightway to the right; and St. Croix, still unobserved, followed the sound of his guide's slippered feet over the uneven pavement and up five stone steps, then along a shorter passage to where a door stood half ajar, admitting to a narrow, dimly lit room. This, in fact, was Haritha's dressing room; and for a moment, St. Croix, who guessed it as such, hesitated to enter, or approach farther.

But he had gone too far for doubts or half-measures, for in two minutes, he figured, Haritha herself would enter the room from the stage side.

"Monsieur!" he said, as he stood, hat in hand, in the doorway.

The old Arab turned suddenly in surprise at being thus addressed out of his preconceived solitude.

"You are the *parent* of Mademoiselle Haritha—what *parent*—father or uncle or grandfather—I know not. Nor do I know your name, nor her surname. But I am here to meet her—and you," he added, as if to mollify his auditor's perceptions.

"But why? We know you not. It will surely profit nothing."

"I have seen her—I have seen her dance. It is enough!" Then, as a sudden thought: "But what is it here? It is not enough. Ah, monsieur—at the Théâtre de Délices in Paris—where I—"

"Monsieur, you must go. She comes at once—in twenty seconds more. And she is—she cannot be visible to anyone at first."

"Then I will wait here."

"But no," said the old man, as he hastened to shut the door. "We are satis—"

The rest of the sentence was lost to the young Frenchman, as from the inky darkness of the passage he heard the advancing patter of nimble feet, and saw a moving shadow join the opaquer stationary one of the old man's extremities athwart the light of the doorstep.

There came the sound of talking. At last, to St. Croix's amazement, the door was opened wide. Haritha stood in street costume by the old man's side, and both appeared bent on departure.

"Ah, why do you trouble us?" The question was asked in sadness, rather than anger.

"I must meet Haritha," said St. Croix simply. "My name is Henri St. Croix," he added, turning to her, and bowing low. "I have seen you, and have seen you dance, and I must speak with you."

The girl was looking with downcast gaze, and her *hubara* held a trifle upward toward her face. Whether she had seen him at all, St. Croix could not tell.

How beautiful she was—how refined, and pure-looking, with that allure of poise and carriage of the Arab race! Ah, she must look at him, and speak to him. The presence of the old man seemed to have faded from St. Croix's recollection entirely. It was as if they two stood alone, he and this girl whom he had seen but twice, in the teeming mysteries of the feelings which she had awakened in him, and which it seemed she alone could satisfy.

"Monsieur St. Croix," said the old man—and he spoke whisperingly, and with a tenderness not to be described—"Allah—whose name be praised—has willed that Haritha should hear, and speak to, no one but himself."

The Frenchman, startled, looked at him, fell back, then dropped to his knees, and for an instant pressed one hand tightly to his eyes; then, groping, he reached for one of the *rakkas*'s hands and bore it unchallenged to his lips.

"*Dame de Dieu!*" he said, as he let them pass.

TWO SONGS

By John Hall Wheelock

LIFE burns us up like fire,
And song goes up in flame:
The radiant body smoulders
To the ashes whence it came.

Out of things it rises
With a mouth that laughs and sings,
Backward it fades and falters
Into the char of things.

Yet soars a voice above it—
Love is holy and strong;
The best of us forever
Escapes in Love and Song.

II

WHEN our two hearts
Rhyme in the dawn,
Beyond all life
I am withdrawn,

Beyond all evil
And all good
With you in a
White solitude.

Urging beyond them
Breath on breath—
Paint follow the feet
Of Life and Death.



BRIGGS—Bilkins is going to join our poker club.
GRIGGS—Bilkins! Why, he is a deacon in the church!
"That so? I'm glad you warned me."

SURNAMED BARNABAS

By William R. Lighton

... surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, the Son of Consolation)
... —ACTS, IV: 36.

WHEN the *Herald* assigned Tommy Burke to the day police run he was the rawest of raw recruits in the newspaper game. He was hardly more than that in the game of life—twenty-two or thereabouts, clear-eyed, clear-skinned, clean-minded; a youngster who had never practiced nor been the victim of a wile. Naturally he was in for a series of shocks.

He got the first of these on the Monday morning when his training began. There was a heavy "grist" on that morning. It was the first Monday of the month. The blotter showed the usual string of over-Sunday drunks and petty offenders. These were mostly of the sort that might be called law-abiding wrongdoers—good citizens, hard working middle class folk who interpreted broadly the injunction of Rest Day. They made it serve as a brief, crude respite from the baffling business of trying to get a living by approved ways on the other six. They were not a bad lot. By a slight twist of Destiny's wrist they might have spent the day dressed in Sunday best, profitably bent upon the saving of their souls. But the harsh need for worldly saving through the week made them a bit spendthrift on the spiritual side.

These men did not much interest Tommy. They were all too obvious; they struck him as dull, commonplace, mere float on the surface of things. He was looking for the unique. There were others in the room more inviting to his unaccustomed mind.

By long custom of the police department, the first Monday of the month had been fixed as the time for dragnetting the professional transgressors out of their retreats in the depths, to be tallied and held to an accounting. No, not all; but those who, having failed to negotiate immunity, must appear in public and do penance—not for their sins but for their oversight.

Tommy couldn't understand that company on the second bench, as it was huddled in from the jail corridor by the court officer. It was a motley company. Some of the men, to be sure, were understandable—the blear, unkempt derelicts brought up from the ooze at the bottom of the waters. And there were some of the women who gave him no difficulty—those with the furtive, hard eyes and the curiously sensual-cruel lips. A cloistered monk might have accounted for these at a glance. But there were others, five or six of them, who seemed quite out of place.

They were handsome women, all, modest-mannered, tastefully clothed. Those gowns and hats bespoke a discriminating refinement. It was the refinement that costs money, too. Tommy was not an analyst when it came to appraising a woman; he could do nothing more than accept her for what she appeared to be. So far as he could see, these were women of his own class. He found himself puzzling over them, wondering what uncouth accident of circumstance had brought them here. One in particular gripped his interest.

She was the best-looking of them all, and the demurest. According to Tommy's elastic standard of judgment, she was about thirty years old—perhaps a

year or two more or less, though he leaned rather toward the kindlier side. But a year or two in her case wouldn't make much of a difference. Tommy thought that she must have been growing more and more attractive with the passing of time. She showed a certain bloom of full maturity which became her amazingly. Her dark hair was abundant and beautiful. Her dark eyes, in the rare moments when she revealed them by a swift glance about the room, were full of a subtle light. Her vividly colored, full-lined lips were enticing. Her face and figure carried an uncommon charm; and it was the charm of personality, even more than of person, that distinguished her. While he admired, Tommy was very sorry for her; it was a strong offense to his untried sense of chivalry that she must bear the indignity of such surroundings as these. He wished for her speedy release.

The beginning of her release was speedy enough, in all conscience, once Magistrate Ike Gorsky had finished his cigar over by the open window and waddled to his chair. Speed was Gorsky's strong point; it was a pet vanity as insatiable as a lofty ambition; but it was safer than ambition. Gorsky knew what he was there for: to do the will of those who sent him whenever matters of importance were called to a showdown. Between times he was free to indulge his own caprices as he chose. He had chosen harmlessly. He was no reformer. Not upon any account would he have sought to disturb so much as a punctuation mark in the police ordinances made and provided. That was none of his business. And as for seeking to change the current of life for one of those wayfarers who were daily drifting before him, he would as soon have thought of turning his salary back into the city treasury at the end of the month.

Another police judge, somewhere, had once set a record by disposing of twenty misdemeanors in one minute by the watch. Gorsky had set his heart upon beating this count. As yet he had failed, but he was still trying. Justice? Why, no, maybe it didn't raise the quality of justice; but why did these law-

breakers come before him anyway? If they wanted nice justice, let them go and arrange for it with the bosses.

When Gorsky had settled his fat bulk in his chair, he tucked back his cuffs from his fat wrists, eased the collar about his fat neck, lugged his fat gold watch from his pocket and laid it upon the desk at his elbow, then signaled to the court officer with a nod of his fat head. With no polite ceremony the officer emptied the benches and marshaled the prisoners into line, heading the procession into the narrow railed way that led past Gorsky's desk. He, too, was something of a master of expedition. Peterson, of the *Telegraph*, watch in hand, leaned across the press table and muttered to the *Star* man: "Thirty-three of 'em. I'll bet you the drinks he don't do it under two minutes." Gorsky's weakness had become mildly celebrated among the habitués of the court.

The procession defiled past the desk as cattle are run through a stockyard's chute. There were no trials in these cases; the proofs were already tabulated and conclusions foregone. Other cases waited for a hearing later; but these were nothing more than matters of form. Last of the line was the woman who had impressed herself upon Tommy's fresh young imagination.

There was a rapid rattle of speech at the desk, as monotonous and meaningless to Tommy's ears as the recitation of a Latin ritual, question and response overlapping each other in an indistinguishable blur. Most of those in the line were regular patrons of these first-Monday events; a few of them were humorously lending themselves to helping Gorsky along. Not a word could Tommy understand. The other newspaper boys were not trying; they would get their lists by and by at the desk. But Tommy's inexperience made him fearful that he was missing something.

Gorsky's job was finished—not in record time, but with dizzying haste. The thirty-three had passed on from his desk to the clerk's. Those who had money for their fines were settling and going their ways; those who had none were

being shunted aside for return to the cells.

The handsome, modest-mannered woman paused before the clerk, then turned toward the street door. Tommy's brain was still confused. His instructions at the office had been that he must keep on the lookout for good, crisp "human interest" stories. Surely, he thought, the case of that woman was not in the common run. He left his seat and followed her to the street.

She had not hesitated as to the way she would go, but had turned directly uptown and was walking with a swift, firm step. Tommy held his place in the background, keeping her in sight until he could make up his mind what he would do. He did not know how to address her; he was checked by the fear of offending.

She went straight to the post office, straight to a lock box in a side corridor, opened it and withdrew a letter. Quickly she scrutinized the address; then, as if upon sudden strong impulse and oblivious to chance oversight, she lifted the letter to her lips. Holding it clasped tight against her bosom, she walked to a secluded corner window, tore open the envelope and began to read.

Holding aloof, but watching intently, Tommy saw that there were many sheets, written closely upon both sides. The woman was reading with an almost painful absorption. It was good news the letter held—that was plain enough. She was smiling happily; her cheeks were suffused by a glow of strong color; more than once, in the excess of her feeling, she touched her eyes with a dainty handkerchief. Tommy was glad with her.

But he wasn't getting his story. Presently he mustered his courage and approached her, hat in hand. "I beg your pardon," he began, with shy deference.

She glanced at him above her letter, her expression swiftly changing. It was not surprise that Tommy saw, nor any sign of offense; she was merely alertly on the defensive, waiting.

"I beg your pardon," Tommy said again. "I am the *Herald's* police re-

porter. I saw you down there a few minutes ago."

Clearly she was not offended, for her face was lit with an amused smile at his evident embarrassment. "Yes?" she said softly.

Tommy laughed weakly in boyish confusion. "This is my first day at the work," he said. "You see, I'm awfully new at it. I didn't quite understand what was going on, and I didn't like to ask the other fellows."

He hesitated, while their eyes held. It was impossible for anyone not to like this clean, frank youngster. Her face was softened into an expression more kindly than amusement. "What is it?" she asked. "I'll tell you whatever you want to know, if I can." The soft, rich voice gave him new confidence.

"Why," he said, "I was trying to make out the people I saw. I hope you won't think I'm just impertinent, because I don't mean to be. But you—you were so—different from the others. I couldn't help wondering why you were there, and I didn't know how to go about finding out, except by asking you."

She was studying him closely as he confessed this woeful innocence. Her eyes had become strangely grave as they were fixed upon his. She was plainly making no effort at concealment of her thoughts. Her glance meant that, whatever the range of her experience, here was a man of a sort unfamiliar. To Tommy her look was inscrutable; no matter what the frankness of its revelation, it held a mystery that was past his understanding.

She took her own time for answering his question, as if it was not easy to make up her mind what she would say. "You didn't know why I was there?" she echoed. And then, after a moment of irresolution: "Oh," she said quietly, steadily, her eyes averted, "there's nothing to it, except that I'm not a favorite with the police, that's all. Their favor costs more than I can afford to pay."

Slowly her meaning found its way into Tommy's mind. He was mightily surprised, shocked, embarrassed. "Oh!" he said, almost frightened. "I didn't

know. I beg your pardon. I didn't think—"

She raised her eyes again to his. "That's all right," she said; "it doesn't matter." There was nothing forward in her words, nothing but a grave reserve as to her own feeling. She was seeking to put him at his ease. She looked at him steadily as he stood nervously fingering his hat brim. After a moment she smiled with gentle friendliness. "You are just a boy, aren't you?" she asked.

"Yes," he owned. "This newspaper work is the first I've done since I've left school. I have a lot of things to learn."

She ignored that part of it. "You're not a great deal older than my own son," she said; "and you don't look at all unlike him."

Tommy was surprised into forgetfulness of his confusion. "Your son!" he cried. "A son nearly as old as I am? Why, how old are you?"

She laughed gaily, light-heartedly. "What a question!" she retorted. "I sha'n't tell you. But I'm old enough to be the mother of a son almost as old as you are." She fluttered the sheets in her hand. "Here's a letter from him," she said. "I got it just now. See!"

She turned to the last page and pointed to the closing lines: "With a heart full of love for you, blessed mother. Barnabas."

With an air of infinite tenderness she fondled the leaves, folding, unfolding, refolding, brooding over them, thinking her own thoughts. Her dark eyes shone with a dreamy light. "He's a good son," she said. "He'll be nineteen next month. I wish I could tell you about him. I go nearly wild sometimes with wanting to talk about him. But I can't, with—the people I know. They wouldn't understand. He's my consolation. That's what his name means—Barnabas: consolation."

She fell silent, caressing the letter with fond fingers. Tommy was wondering, as he pieced the facts together. He had trouble in getting them harmonized. "Where is your son?" he asked.

"He's in Denver," she said. "I've had him out there for years, in school,

taking a course in mining engineering. He'll finish next year. Then— Tell me," she interrupted herself impetuously, "you won't mind if I tell you a little about him? I feel as if I *must* talk with someone, after getting this letter from him."

"Please do tell me," said Tommy. "Indeed, I'd like to know about him."

For a little time she stood looking out of the window. The street was full of hurrying passers-by, but she was not observing these; her eyes were directed above and beyond them, as if upon some far, fair picture.

"I know what you must be thinking," she said very quietly. "You're wondering why he isn't with me. He's been away from me since he was just a little boy. There wasn't any other way, unless we were to have nothing more than a wretched, bare living. Don't you see?" She turned to Tommy with a glance that was at once an appeal and a confident assurance. "I was bound he should have something better than that. I'd had enough of miserable poverty when I was a girl. I meant to give him something better—advantages, you know, and a chance. It wasn't possible if I kept him with me. Can't you see how that was? So I sent him away. I've seen him only once or twice a year. But I've provided for him. He'll begin his life a trained man."

Her simple statement had carried a matter-of-fact frankness in the mere words; but her manner bore an inexpressible delicacy. Tommy's sense of embarrassment was quite gone; it seemed absurd that he could have indulged it at all. A subtle warmth of sympathy had come between them.

"He was all I had in the world," she pursued, "and I had nothing in the world to give him but my love. That wasn't enough—just my love. I thought it all out when he was a little chap. A woman will give a great deal for love, if she loves well enough. I made up my mind to give all I could. Oh"—she checked her quiet statement with a sudden flash of heightened color and feeling—"I know how I'd be judged by most people, if they knew. They'd call me

wicked, of course. I know that; I've known it all the time; I knew it before I decided on what I've done. But it hasn't made any difference to me. I'm not a wicked woman. It's wicked sometimes to do a thing for yourself alone, when it isn't wicked at all to do it for somebody else, for love's sake. Anyway, I made up my mind that I'd rather take chances with my wickedness than let my boy take his chances without the training I wanted to give him. You see what a lack of training meant for me when it came to providing for him. Why wouldn't it be as full of danger for him? I wouldn't take the risk of failing to give him what I could; that's all."

The seriousness of her argument passed into a mood of buoyant gaiety. "If it had failed," she said brightly—"if he had turned out a failure, I mean—it would have been worse than heartbreak. It would have killed me. But he didn't. Just look at this!" Quickly she found a paragraph in her letter and held out the sheet for Tommy to see, standing at his side while he read, following the lines with him:

I would give the heart out of my body, dearest, if you could have been with me here this week! It has been such a splendid week. Three times in classroom I have been singled out for praise on account of the work I have done. And that isn't all. In my last letter I told you about the gentleman who had visited the school from the Cripple Creek field—Mr. Clarendon—do you remember? He has been here ever since—three whole days—and for two nights he has been chumming with me in my room, talking and talking and talking. He's a splendid fellow, with a world of experience. Both times it was away past midnight when he went away; and last night, after he had quizzed me for two straight hours about the things I've been doing and planning, he asked me to come down and work with him in my vacation this summer. He said he had been making a lot of inquiries about me here, and that he had begun to like me first rate. There is more, too: he told me that this summer's vacation work will be just a tryout, to see how we get along together, and that if I don't have anything better offered by the time I'm through with school he will give me a permanent place next year, superintending some new development work they will be starting then. He offered to make a contract with me now if I wanted it. He told me he would give me twenty-five hundred dollars a year at the start, and that after that I could have as much as I showed myself able to

earn. What do you think of that? Isn't it glorious?

But it isn't the glory, nor yet the twenty-five hundred, that I'm thinking about. It's the great, deep meaning of these things—you! They mean that from the very day I'm through with the school you'll be with me; not for a few distracted days, but for *always*; and I'll be taking care of you, making a home for you—the home we have been dreaming about, with just us two in it, and—

Laughing softly, she took the letter from Tommy's hand, folding it away. Her face was flushing with strong joy.

"You see!" she said. "Oh, it's been worth it—worth it! Just one more year!"

Tommy's eyes were moist, and there was a choke in his throat. The woman's argument had been beyond him; but the boy's rhapsody he could understand. It had never fallen to him to debate over the justification of evil; but a son's exultant pride in a mother's love was within his compass. He and his own mother had been seeing visions together.

"I'm glad," he said simply. "I know he'll make you happy. Of course he doesn't know."

"Doesn't know how I'm living?" she supplied. "Of course he doesn't! I've lied to him well. Oh, if sins are really taken into account, instead of reasons, I'll have a hard settlement to make some time." But she said it brightly, with a low laugh, as if the prospect held no terrors for her. She adjusted her hat and drew on her gloves. "Well, good-bye," she said. "Maybe I'll tell you some more about him once in a while. It's done me a world of good to talk about him. I get frantic with merely thinking. One year more! Good-bye."

Tommy did not see her again through the first month of his apprenticeship. He had not much time for thinking of what she had told him, save as the presence of the hapless women in the police court of a morning would bring it back briefly to his mind. There were many of these women. For the first time Tommy was getting fugitive glimpses of that part of life. It depressed him, dismayed him—not so much by its raw, brutal facts as by the grim, inscrutable mask with which it faced the world.

Day by day, one by one, he studied those women's faces, and they troubled him. Had those lives, he wondered, their consolations? To his eyes, a world old melancholy seemed to brood over them, a melancholy more destroying than death. These glimpses were not revealing the underworld with its trumpeted allurements; and it made him shudder to think that he was seeing the real life—a life not of fleeting enticement but of eternal consequences. The women seemed to know nothing beyond helpless acceptance and endurance. Where were their consolations hidden?

When another first-Monday function was scheduled, Tommy saw the mother again. He was less a stranger to the detail of jail and courtroom now, privileged to go about as he would. He found her in the women's room in the jail, in the hour before the opening of the morning session, waiting.

She was not in any wise downcast. She greeted him in cheerful, friendly fashion, as though his sharing in her confidence had put them on a firm ground of acquaintance. There was even a certain eagerness in her eyes as they met his, a note of inquiry. He sat down by her side and went straightway to what he knew was in her mind.

"What do you hear from your son? I hope he's had nothing but good news for you." He spoke quietly, so that none of the others in the room would hear.

She nodded, her face wearing a happy radiance. "Nothing but good news," she echoed. "He'll go down to Cripple Creek next month for his summer's work. He's so perfectly enthusiastic about it. I wish I could show you some of the letters I've had. He's such a dear boy!" She murmured an inarticulate syllable that was half a laugh and half a word of soft endearment. "Tomorrow is his birthday," she said. "Nineteen. In a little while he'll be a man—a great, strong man—a *good* man, ready and able to do his part in the world. I'll be so proud of him!" She talked on and on, always of him, as though she would never tire. Sometimes she spoke in fond retrospect,

sometimes in bright forecast. Always her boy was the center of the picture, herself in the background, a mere incident to his well-being. She seemed fairly obsessed by her thought of him.

Tommy spoke abruptly the question that had troubled him through the month. "Tell me: these other women—how do they live, with nothing to hope for? Why do they want to live at all? I can't see where there's even any make-believe happiness in it for them."

He could not forget the look she gave him—a look of sudden abject terror. Her cheeks were colorless, her lips the pallid blue-white of death, her wide eyes full of mortal pain. "Oh!" she breathed, a long drawn, sobbing sigh that was hardly more than a whisper, yet unfathomable in its depth of feeling. "Don't—don't!" With a flashing glance she swept the bare, ugly room and its other occupants. They appeared to Tommy an average lot of police court victims, as he had seen them from day to day—stolid, animal, common, disclosing their proper selves with every emotion save hopelessness stripped away. On the bench beside the door a fat, overdressed blonde was jesting coarsely, listlessly, with the court officer who waited at the grating. Beyond, in a dark corner, a thin slip of a girl, plainly a novice, pale and sick with fear, was crying quietly, her face bent upon her hands. The others merely waited. Tommy felt that the woman at his side shivered as under a shock of cold, and her breath was sharply indrawn. "Oh, it's terrible!" she breathed.

A signal had come; the grated door swung back and the officer spoke in harsh command. The woman rose and passed out with the others, silently, looking neither to right nor left. Tommy had no further chance to speak with her.

The last edition of the *Herald* had gone to press in the afternoon when he was called to the city desk.

"Here, Burke. The police telephone that one of the Painted Row women has just shot herself—Maud Something-or-other. You'll find out at the station. Go and see if you can't dig some human

interest out of it. You're not getting enough of that in your stuff. If it isn't there, fake a little. Nobody cares."

A knot of people had clustered about the door when Tommy found the place—men and women, morbidly curious. An officer stationed at the entrance let him pass. A clerk from the coroner's office, waiting in the hallway, took him to the room where the body lay on a couch, covered with a sheet. Two girls in gay kimonos, wide-eyed with a dumb, animal sort of awe, were in the room, whispering together by one of the lace-curtained street windows.

"What was her name?" Tommy asked of the coroner's clerk.

"Maud Mitchell, the girls say," answered the clerk. "Here, take a look. The Old Man ain't got here yet; but they'll be movin' her pretty quick."

He turned back the sheet. An involuntary, startled cry escaped Tommy's lips as he looked down upon the face of the dead woman.

"Why—why," he said stupidly—"I saw her this morning, in police court. She was alive this morning."

"I reckon she was," returned the clerk. "But she sure ain't any more, not this last twenty minutes." He replaced the covering and drew a cigar from his pocket. "No, sir, she sure ain't any more," he repeated. "She's gone from us, Maud has. Real neat about it, too, she was—right plumb through the heart. Got a match?"

His cigar uptilted in the corner of his mouth, he passed aimlessly about the room, pausing before a small, carved desk. The desk top was open, and he began idly fingering the papers within.

"The lady was certainly some correspondent, wasn't she?" he commented. "This desk's chuck full of letters; I'll bet there's a million. 'Mother, Beloved.' 'Your adoring son, Barnabas.' 'My Sweetheart Mother.' 'With undying love, Barnabas.' Strong on it, ain't he? Why, they're all from Barnabas. What's all this anyway, Clara?"

One of the girls joined him at the desk, looking curiously at the papers in his hand, her arm resting familiarly upon his shoulder. "I don't know," she

said. "She always kept it locked before. She was a great hand for writin'; she was always writin', it seemed like. But she never said anything about it. I didn't know she had any son. She never told us girls, did she, Joy? Don't you reckon he ought to be notified? Where's his letters wrote from? Denver. Yes, sir, Jimmy, I b'lieve you ought to notify him."

But the clerk was not attending. He was puzzling over another sheet.

"Look here, Burke," he said; "what do you make out of this? Here's one of 'em I don't get the sense of. 'My Own Mother'—that's the way it starts off, see? But there's no 'Barnabas' to this one. There's no finish to it at all; it just ends up with a lot of rot. You look at it."

The letter was dated two days gone—Saturday. For two pages it moved along briskly, smoothly, the pen seeming not to have paused over word or phrase; but on the third page—the last—there was a difference. A break had come. Here the pen had lagged feebly, with words interlined and all the vim gone from the phrasing. The last sentence was broken midway, unfinished. Below were a few purposeless scratches, and then the sentence: "Why do they want to live at all, with only make-believe happiness?"

"Make-believe happiness!" The words struck upon Tommy's memory hard and cold. That phrase had been in his mind persistently of late. He had used it that morning in talking with the woman. What did it mean? Dully he groped for a solution.

"And look here," said the coroner's clerk. "It's dated at Denver, like the rest of 'em; but it ain't been folded up yet. Ain't that funny? Can you see through it? I can't make head or tail of it. Wait a minute, though!" He picked half a dozen letters from the packed pigeonholes, examining them. "Every one of 'em's dated Denver," he said; "but every last one of 'em's got the envelopes postmarked *here*. Wouldn't that get you? Say, what kind of a gag was Maud tryin' to work on herself, anyway?"

"They're her own handwritin', too!" the girl cried with the shrill ecstasy of discovery. "Yes, sir, every one of 'em! I know it, because I got her to write a letter for me, just last week, one day. Joy, what d'you know about that? She's wrote them letters her own self—and to herself! Well, what in the name o' God!"

Slowly, very slowly, Tommy's understanding cleared. From far up the street came the clatter of the coroner's hurrying ambulance. Tommy stood at the side of the couch lifting the hem of the sheet, looking down again upon the

woman's face. With death upon it, it seemed quite unchanged since he had last seen it, living, in the women's room at the jail—colorless, drawn, spiritless. Before, it had been distinguished from those other faces by its look of vital happiness—happiness born of God knew what fond, foolish illusion, conceived, God knew how, for her sustaining. Dead, it had become one with the others, a mask for the hiding of the heart's mortal agony. They were all masks, those faces. Consolation! If she had found it, beyond the illusion, there was no sign.



INTO ARCADY

By Marsh K. Powers

THERE is no highway, broad and free,
Straight to the goal of our pilgrimkind.
There's only a path into Arcady.

Were it a road that the crowd could see,
Even the halt might lead the blind.
There is no highway, broad and free.

Somewhere, by hill and tangled lea,
Hither and thither the way is twined—
There's only a *path* into Arcady.

Thou who art seeking the road with me,
Cities and streets we must leave behind—
There is no highway, broad and free.

Dear heart—what shall our guidestar be?
(Close—watch close—where the footsteps wind.)
There's only a path into Arcady.

Thousands are seeking in vain, but we—
(*God be willing*)—the way shall find.
There is no highway, broad and free—
There's only a path into Arcady.



MANY a man hugs a delusion.

THE SPIKED CLUB

By Joseph Elliott

MILLARD THOMPSON was thirty-five years old and a rising young man when he married. There was nothing brutal about him. He was potentially strong and an indefatigable worker. For years he had labored nineteen hours a day toward the goal of wealth. His time was money, and he who purloined his minutes put his hand into his pocket.

Therefore he ordered his day with the precision of a general campaigning. His meals were exactly on time. His car was at the door exactly on time. And his wife was exactly on time and quite happy.

This last condition was rather a phenomenon to Mrs. Thompson's acquaintances. She was the daughter of wealthy parents, reared in the lap of luxury, and was the martinet of her household—before her marriage.

Thompson's method of wooing was the only variation of that popular amusement that she was unfamiliar with. She had listened to the importunities of scores of lovesick swains. She had been proposed to over pianos, pool tables, canoe paddles and dance cards by many eligible and very many ineligible young men. But Thompson's love-making resembled none of them.

At the time of their meeting Thompson was walking along a lonely road, inhaling for so many strides, holding his breath for so many and exhaling according to the doctor's prescription. His future wife was riding horseback astride and looking back at a bend in the road where the river glittered through the trees. Thompson had his head bent and the horse only escaped running him down by swerving sharply to one side—

an action that pitched the girl headlong from the saddle on top of Thompson and knocked him prone upon the dust.

He picked himself up first, then helped her to her feet and asked her shortly why the devil she didn't take care where she was riding. The girl was both shaken and shocked. No one had ever talked to her in that manner before. She made this fact known to Thompson, who, after finding her unhurt, replied that it was high time someone did. Then he helped her catch and mount the horse and left her with a parting admonition to keep her eyes about her in the future.

Later they were formally introduced. The introduction was of the girl's seeking. She apologized for the incident on the road, and Thompson, contrary to her expectation, accepted the apology as a deference that was due him and an incident wholly to be expected. He did not even return the compliment by begging pardon for swearing at her. The result was that his mask of indifference puzzled and interested her and she invited him to dine with her father, with whom she lived alone.

Thompson accepted, and his visit was the first of many. Sometimes there were others and sometimes they sat alone upon the veranda, watching the moonlight play upon the water and listening to the faint laughter, intermingled with distance-softened orchestral melodies that floated up from the hotel porches. Thompson talked of books—Thoreau, Balzac, Taine—anything and everything but love. And each night the girl stood half hidden in the shadow and asked him to return.

His visits ended one night when he

told her abruptly that he was going away—going back to the city. She said that she was sorry and that she would call at his hotel with the trap to take him to the station. He half turned back when he was part way down the gravel walk, then straightened his shoulders and continued on to the gate, while the girl from her shadowed porch watched him out of sight.

Neither spoke during the ride to the station. On the platform Thompson paced nervously up and down, watch in hand, till a puff of white smoke proclaimed the close approach of the train, then he turned to his companion and said: "Agnes, I've decided to get married."

The girl gasped. "To whom?" she queried.

"You," said Thompson.

"But—but you must give me time," she parried, blushing.

"You've got three minutes," responded Thompson.

He stood before her, watch in hand, while she nervously tapped the station platform with her shoe and twisted her handkerchief with shaking fingers. The train swung around a bend and stopped with a shriek of brakes. Thompson signaled to a porter and turned to the girl.

"Come on," he said, snapping shut his watch and leading the way toward the parlor car without so much as turning around.

She followed, and they were married as soon as the necessary formalities could be disposed of. Whereupon her father cut her off and refused them the house.

Thompson allowed himself ten days for a honeymoon and spent it in Central Park within easy reach of a telephone. At the expiration of that period he again plunged into his work, permitting himself three hours a day, from seven till ten in the evening, in which to enjoy the companionship of his wife. Promptly at ten he secluded himself in his study.

This regimen was kept up for three years, when it received its first serious setback through the visit of her father, who had married again, and her stepmother.

In the case of Mrs. Thompson's father the established laws of sex relationship had undergone the inevitable change that time brings to an unsteady nature. Instead of posing as a hero, it was he who worshiped at the shrine of strength, and that shrine was adorned by his latest female acquisition. Their venture into the Thompson matrimonial oligarchy served as a revelation to both women.

"John," said her stepmother, as she entered the Thompson flat, "I left my reticule in the car. Please get it."

Her father hastened to obey the command, while his daughter looked at this dictatorial Amazon with wonder.

"Where is Millard?" asked her stepmother, after the formalities of a greeting.

"He is busy," the wife replied. "He is working on a brief. It means five thousand dollars, and it must be finished tonight."

"Agnes," broke in the voice of Thompson, "get my pipe."

His wife obeyed and the two women eyed each other curiously.

"Poor child!" the elder woman cooed.

"Is he kind to you? Are you happy?"

Thompson's wife laughed a little uneasily. "Quite happy," she replied; "and he is very kind."

And so the seed of discord was sown by this social meddler. Of course it did not take root at once and flourish. Their aims were too much alike and their association too close. It awaited the fertile soil of separation and inactivity. An opportunity for its growth was provided by Thompson's increasing wealth.

He made money rapidly. Everything he touched turned to gold. His financial position demanded that he entertain and they moved from their comfortable but unostentatious quarters to a \$10,000 apartment on Riverside Drive. Here the seed sprouted into a healthy young weed. Social inanities claimed their attention and they soon found themselves embarked on a flood of idle entertainment. The woman came into her own, but the man found himself about as much at home as a fish in

a cow pasture. The need for mutual fellowship and help was gone with their poverty. The woman assumed an esthetic temperament, became interested in clubs and even ventured to raise her voice in opposition to her husband's.

And Thompson floundered around in the social cow pasture with a thorough and deeply planted detestation. He took no interest in the adventures of the cotillion, the diamonds of Mrs. Beaumont-Jones nor the idiosyncrasies of the "fast set." In fact, he evolved into one of those lights of the financial world who carefully mask their illumination with a dress suit and follow their wives to social functions in much the same manner that a fighting bulldog will march sedately behind a woman in the park.

The weed was now grown to a full-blown nettle with a million spiny points with which to rupture conjugal happiness. They lived, as do thousands of other rich New Yorkers, on terms of reasonable friendliness, but utterly without intimacy.

Then Thompson lost his money as rapidly as he had made it. Bit by bit it slipped through his fingers. His every turn was a failure. And at last he sat in his ten-thousand-dollar apartment gazing out over the smoky Hudson at a ruined man.

His wife was at her stepmother's. There was to be a reception in honor of a visiting member of the peerage and she was one of the hostesses. He wrote her a short note and set about packing a few belongings.

The girl read the note and hurried to her parents.

"Millard is ruined," she said.

Her father stroked his mustache and glanced at his wife. "He made his money too rapidly," he commented.

"I must go to him at once," she faltered.

Her stepmother glanced at her pityingly. "Don't be a fool," she counseled. "You are no longer a girl. You can't go back to a life of slavery. At least stay here for the night and think the matter over. I will telephone Millard that you are ill and that you will see him tomorrow."

The girl rose after a sleepless night. Her stepmother, happy with the happiness of a woman engineering the domestic broil of another, was waiting for her.

"I have just talked with Millard over the telephone," she announced. "He has given up the Riverside Drive apartment and taken a lease upon his former quarters. He is going to begin over again and he wants you to hurry to him."

Her course lay plain before her. On the one hand was divorce, the continuance of the social ease and triumphs she had known both before and since her marriage, and comparative freedom. On the other lay a ruined husband and the necessity of again assuming the role of a dutiful wife subservient to a strong and commanding nature.

"You can't go back," continued her stepmother. "Your father and I have talked it over. The man is impossible as a husband; he is a martinet, and the course he has laid means inevitable sacrifice. You must stay with us."

The girl gazed past the figure of the elder woman, toward the twin roads that lay before her, and decided—decided as nine women out of ten would have done.

"I can't go back," she sobbed. "I can't live with him and cook for him again. It would kill me! I shall take him my jewelry and let him sell my limousine. I'll do anything for him, but I can't go back!"

"Then it's settled," said her stepmother. She turned to her husband. "Have the car at the door in half an hour," she continued. "We will accompany Agnes to her husband, and after she has told him of her decision you will tell him what I think of him."

It was eleven o'clock when the girl, her stepmother and her father passed the black hallboy in the dingy flat where Thompson and his bride had spent their days of poverty. Five minutes later they were ushered into the chaotic apartment of Millard Thompson by a disheveled servant.

As the door closed the two women held a whispered conversation, the elder

patting the younger woman encouragingly on the arm and glancing ominously toward the shirt-sleeved figure that sat with squared chin and unlighted cigar intent upon a ledger and oblivious of their presence. The girl left the group and confronted the figure.

"Millard," she began, "I have come to tell you that I can't come back. I—"

The door closed with a bang and only the muffled tones of an angry conversation disturbed the stillness. Then the door opened and Mrs. Thompson appeared. She walked slowly toward her father and stepmother.

"What did he say?" questioned the elder woman excitedly. "Did you tell

him that he was a brute and that no woman could live with him?"

The strident voice of Thompson broke in upon the interrogation. "Agnes," he said, "get my pipe and tell that maid to set about preparing luncheon. I shall eat early."

"You don't mean to say that you let him bully you into submission!" cried the elder woman in astonishment. "You weren't silly enough—"

"How dare you speak to me in that manner?" cried the girl. "He didn't bully me. He loves me. We are going to start over again and make another fortune. And besides, he is my husband!"



SPRING IN JAPAN

By Louis Untermeyer

A YELLOW raft sails up the bluest stream
And cherry blossoms cloud the shore with pink,
The sky grows clearer with a curious gleam
And boys come playing to the river brink.

A grayish gull descends to preen and prink—
Far off, a singing ploughman drives his team—
A yellow raft sails up the bluest stream
And cherry blossoms cloud the shore with pink.

Oh, to be there—far from this tangled scheme
Of strident days, and nights that flare and sink!
Let Beauty lift us with a colored dream,
And as we muse, too rapt and wise to think,
A yellow raft sails up the bluest stream
And cherry blossoms cloud the shore with pink.



WIFE (*pouting*)—You never kiss me good-bye any more.
HUSBAND—Well, I can assure you, my dear, it isn't because I don't want to.

THE ETERNAL MYSTERY*

By George Jean Nathan

CHARACTERS

A DYING MAN
HIS WIFE
HIS LITTLE SON
A PHYSICIAN

PLACE: *The World.*

TIME: *Always.*

SCENE—A room in a house—almost any room, almost any house. This particular room happens to have a large Colonial window at the left, and this lone window happens to be thrown open. It gives out onto what, were it visible, would be seen to be a broad and very low veranda. The window is hung with long curtains of a light summery fabric, maybe madras. Although the window is open, the curtains happen to be drawn, allowing the sunlight to filter into the room only dimly. The side walls (of pale yellow) are bare save for three comparatively small pictures of Robert G. Ingersoll, Thomas Paine and Marconi. On the wall at the back hang two large pictures supposed to look like Voltaire and Ernest Renan, while on the mantelpiece, on either side of a clock, are to be seen small busts of Darwin and Giordano Bruno. There are the usual number of chairs, and there is a door at the right, far up stage, leading to another room.

At the left, some four feet or so this side of the window, stands a long, low writing table strewn with numerous books and pamphlets. Among these the close observer might note Bronson C. Keeler's "Short History of the Bible," "The Origin of Species," Nietzsche's "Human All-Too-Human," a couple of the works of John E. Remsburg (particularly the latter's survey of the Bible), something of Huxley, something of Kant, something of David Hartley, something of Arthur Schopenhauer, something of Harriet Martineau, something of Faustus Socinus, something of Diderot, of David Hume, of Joseph Priestley and of Von Hartmann. There might be noted, too, several magazines of recent date containing accounts of the remarkable scientific and biological achievements of Dr. Alexis Carrel, Elie Metchnikoff and Dr. Loeb. On the table, with seeming incongruity, there happens to be a cathedral candelabrum of silver, a raised candle socket in the center with three lower candle sockets on either side, evidently placed in the man's room by his wife. Another candelabrum like it is visible on the mantelpiece. In the two far corners of the room there are large bookcases laden with medical text-books.

The atmosphere is the atmosphere that prevails in any room in any house of any family of average mental, moral, physical, financial and social decency, although hardly the so-called "realistic" atmosphere with which such a scene on the stage would be invested by overly vain producers who seek by the exercise of elaborate theatrical appurtenances to divert attention from the playwright to themselves.

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At the rise of the curtain, THE DYING MAN, fully clothed, is seated in a large chair to one side of the table, away from the window, but somewhat up stage. This, of course, is contrary to theatrical tradition, which specifies that all dying men must always die in beds in their nightgowns or on the floor (if the play be a military play) or must be standing up and suffer fatal attacks of heart disease during receptions in the last act just as the District Attorney is about to confront them with the proofs and arrest them. The man in this case is at the point of death after a despairing battle with phthisis florida (galloping consumption)—a disease that hits with bare knuckles and that with fine craftiness permits a man his full mental powers until the very end so that he may the more completely appreciate and enjoy his sufferings. In a chair near the man sits THE PHYSICIAN. It is about five o'clock of a summer afternoon.

THE DYING MAN (*with perfect calm and in what is very nearly a normal voice, broken now and then by a racking cough*)

What's your idea?

THE PHYSICIAN

What's yours? You're a physician yourself—you've spent your years fighting this awful thing—you know it from first to last, from the first little cough to the last hemorrhage.

THE DYING MAN

Oh, I know it's but a matter of hours. Have you told my—my wife?

THE PHYSICIAN (*nodding*)

She's in there (*indicating the room at the back*)—with her tears.

THE DYING MAN

My little boy—don't tell him. The end itself will be enough for him. Where is he?

THE PHYSICIAN (*nodding toward the open window*)

On the lawn.

THE DYING MAN

What is he doing—who's with him?

THE PHYSICIAN

Bobby, my boy, and he are playing with the toys you had sent up.

THE DYING MAN

Toys?

THE PHYSICIAN

Yes, he told Bobby yesterday you had ordered some toys for him. They were delivered a short while ago. (*The sound of youngsters' laughter and shouts*

is heard through the window.) Doesn't that sound like it?

THE DYING MAN

Toys—oh, yes. I remember now—the ones I had Ruth telephone for.

THE PHYSICIAN (*looking at THE DYING MAN hard*)

It's terrible, Rayburn, to see a man like you go this way without being able to do a thing to help him. Great God—

THE DYING MAN (*cutting in*)

Great God? Great fiddlesticks! If people would turn their churches, their pious, peacocky, praying cabarets, their fetich joints, into laboratories—and begin thinking and investigating instead of getting on their knees to a superstition, their hundreds of thousands of tubercular fellow human beings like myself might be spared. Save souls? Rat logic, I say! Save lives!

THE PHYSICIAN

Quiet, Rayburn—don't excite yourself. I've heard you go through all that many times before. This is no time—

THE DYING MAN

No time! I suppose, now that I am about to die, you think I'll retract—that I'll lose my mind and call on that something you call God to take me to him! Well, you're wrong. I never believed less in a God in all my life than I do now. God—a creation of ignorant, superstitious minds! If Kellar, the magician, had lived in the savage age, a lot of believe-what-they-readers would be worshipping him today. I repeat: I

never believed less in a God in all my life than I do now!

(The door has opened as THE DYING MAN is speaking, and through it comes HIS WIFE. As she hears the last words, a moan leaves her lips.)

THE WIFE *(with a world of tears in her throat)*

Oh, Jim—don't!

THE DYING MAN *(after a pause)*

Come here, my dear; come to me. I want you near me. I want to speak to you.

THE PHYSICIAN *(rising)*

I'll step into the next room—the door will be open—I'll wait until you call me. *(He goes out.)*

THE DYING MAN

Ruth, sweetheart, you know it's very little time now until I'll have to go. I want you and our boy to—*(The words falter.)*

THE WIFE

Be happy?

THE DYING MAN

To be happy and—

THE WIFE

Then believe. Oh, Jim, believe! All our life together I've prayed to God you would, and now in the hour of our separation I pray to you as well.

THE DYING MAN

If I only could!

THE WIFE

It's so terrible, so horrible, to think of you going this way—defiantly—with eyes that will not see!

THE DYING MAN

Going? I go nowhere, dearest love. I end! I end as a withered plant ends, as a rotten apple—as all of nature ends when its day is done. Belief in some God is nothing but a self-deluding hoax, a sly trick to make death easier.

THE WIFE

But if you should be wrong—if when life has gone you should see?

THE DYING MAN

Ha, you see! Your God, too, is Fear, like the God of all you believers. If there is a God, why isn't he powerful enough to make me believe; why is his influence so puny that thinking men of all time have found in their minds strength ample and more to doubt him?

THE WIFE

Through the doubt of one man, the faith of a million is strengthened.

THE DYING MAN

Nonsense. Through the doubt of one man, the earth was found to be round. Through the doubt of some one man, each marvelous discovery, each great invention, has been born. In doubt lies progress. "The infidels of one age have often been the aureoled saints of the next."

(Again the laughter and shouts of the youngsters penetrate to the darkened room.)

THE WIFE *(pleading)*

For our boy's sake, Jim!

THE DYING MAN

For his dear sake—do. Let him have lesson from me. Let him live his life fearlessly, honestly and with faith only in himself—and in you—and in the woman he'll some day come to love. Let that be his religion. Don't let him trust blindly, ignorantly, bafflingly in something that doesn't, that can't, exist.

THE WIFE

He shall learn from the Bible.

THE DYING MAN *(with a weak laugh)*

The Bible—ha! Then may Fate have pity on his little white heart! The Bible—an immoral fiction fake sanctioning polygamy, slavery, vile massacre! Inspired by God? And it says the earth is flat; it says the earth is the center of the universe; it says that a man should be vindictive, revengeful—"an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"; it teaches that human sin can be transferred to an animal; it says that the blood of a bird killed over running water is medicine; its God-given commandments plagiarized by a thieving deity from the

law codes of infidel India and Egypt; Genesis full of more futile paradox than Chesterton or any other clever smart-aleck; with Humboldt, Darwin and Haeckel showing to us that this God knew mighty little about nature. And with Abraham Lincoln and a thousand—ten thousand—others who've lived and died for humanity proving that the God who said, "I will send the tooth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust," was a blood-licking, cruel, contemptible inferior.

THE WIFE (*persistent; in her same tone*)
He shall learn from the Bible.

THE DYING MAN

The Bible! Learn from the Bible! If a man had faith, the Bible would kill it. Who can answer the superb mind of Ingersoll and its reading of the ridiculous thing? Remember? "God created the world, the hosts of heaven, a man and a woman—placed them in a garden. Then the serpent deceived them and they were cast out. God was thwarted. Then he tried again, and he went on for sixteen hundred years trying to civilize the people. The task was too great. The people grew worse, so the merciful God sent the flood and drowned all but Noah and his family. Then he started again and failed again, and at the Tower of Babel he dispersed and scattered the people. Finding he couldn't succeed with all the people, he thought he'd try a few, so he selected Abraham and his descendants. Again he failed, and his chosen people were captured by the Egyptians and enslaved for four hundred years. He kept on, and he kept failing. He rescued them from Pharaoh and started for Palestine. The people hated him and preferred the slavery of Egypt to the freedom of God. Failure—more failure. He tried again—took them into Palestine and had them governed by judges. Failure. Then by kings. The kings were mostly idolaters. Prophets were tried—but the people grew worse and worse. And God kept on failing. No schools, no sciences, no arts, no commerce. Then God took upon himself flesh and was born of a woman and

lived among the people he had been trying to civilize for several thousand years. And then these choice people, following the law that God had given them, charged this God-man—this Christ—with blasphemy; tried, convicted and killed him. God had failed again. What an administration!"

THE WIFE

Details—little details. God *lives*—Christ *lives*!

THE DYING MAN (*after a brief pause*)

I feel stronger. Knowledge and fearlessness have given me strength.

THE WIFE (*frightened*)

God is playing with you.

THE DYING MAN

Nature, maybe—but nothing else. The mind is stronger than any body, stronger than any God. When Christian Science eventually recognizes the latter and gets rid of its churchy hocus-pocus, it will sweep the enlightened world.

THE WIFE (*in despair*)

This is the hour of death!

THE DYING MAN

If there were a merciful God, my Ruth, would he devise such an hour of death as this? Would he shoot galloping consumption into my body and keep me quivering on the rack? Wouldn't he spare me, or else—wouldn't he kill me quickly, doubter of him that I am?

THE WIFE

Maybe, maybe it's his way of punishment.

THE DYING MAN

Then every year this same equitable God punishes hundreds of thousands of tubercular wretches who believe in him just as cruelly as he is punishing me. What mercy, what wisdom! What a futile farce!

THE WIFE

God created the world, created us, his children, for better or worse.

THE DYING MAN

And who, pray, created God? "You and all other believers are certain there

can be no design without a designer, but you take for granted there can be a designer who wasn't designed."

THE WIFE

Jim, it isn't you who's speaking—no matter what you have thought, you can't say such things—now.

THE DYING MAN

It is I who speaks! Or, at least, the true thought, the truly divine thought, of others speaking through me. And to the last I shall affirm it. I go out forever to the tune of no churchman's professional tears. To leave you, sweet-heart, and our boy—that aches, *that* makes me afraid. *That* makes me tremble. For I know we shall meet in no hereafter. I wish I *could* fool myself—but I can't. I go to death fighting, struggling, cursing—with wrath and fear distorting my face—for death's the end of everything.

THE WIFE (*in a wild prayer*)

Oh, God—great, good, all-powerful God in Heaven—Christ—forgive him, for he knows not what he says!

THE DYING MAN (*reaching out his hand to her*)

You make it even more awful for me.

THE WIFE (*in a rising voice*)

Forgive him! Make him see! Forgive! *Make him see!*

(*There is a dead pause.*)

THE DYING MAN (*calmly, coolly*)

Well, why doesn't he?

THE WIFE

Doesn't He—what?

THE DYING MAN (*gradually working himself up to a white heat*)

Make me see! Why doesn't he "save" me—as they say? If he is so all-great, so all-good, so all-powerful—so all-powerful—why doesn't he send into this little head of mine the Thought of him—*belief*? All belief in God rests upon a miracle, upon several miracles. "Can miracles be established except by miracles?" Why can your God no longer

prove his divinity—why does he weaken, stutter, falter, shrink back as men begin to think more clearly and sanely about his existence? Why shouldn't it be as simple for an all-powerful God—for an all-powerful Christ—to convince in 1913 as it was 1913 years ago? I'll tell you why! Because there never was any convincing in the first place. Miracles—bah! You point to the Bible. The Ascension. Why did Matthew, who was supposed to be present, not think it worth recording? Why was the account of this greatest miracle on which faith rests merely interpolated in Mark and Luke? If Christ really ascended, why didn't John, who was supposed to see the ascension, mention it? Why don't the gospels agree on this, the greatest and basic miracle?

The fact is—and (*pointing to books on the table*) those documents go to prove it—that the Ascension of Christ wasn't claimed by his disciples. If Christ rose, why didn't he appear to his enemies, as Ingersoll asks? Why didn't he do so in the sight of his persecutors, where it would have convinced? Other miracles, too! Matthew talks of twenty-two, Mark nineteen or so, Luke eighteen and John seven—the casting out of devils, curing blindness, walking on water, turning water into wine, raising the dead, being carried to the top of the temple by the Devil. Who can believe such things? I tell you they never could be, never were! Miracles? Imagination! Crazy chatter! Insanity! Insa—

(*A sudden shiver shakes his frame. He brings his hands quickly to his mouth. His face wrinkles in a hideous fear. A jerky quiver and he falls back into the chair, limp. A moment of silence. Then—a scream from HIS WIFE. She starts for the door, distracted, wild. THE PHYSICIAN appears on the threshold. He brushes the woman away, rushes to the man's side and bends over him. The woman stands terrified, silent. The ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece becomes painfully audible.*)

THE WIFE (*finally, in a hushed wail*)
Dead?

THE SMART SET

THE PHYSICIAN (*shaking his head*)
No. This usually comes as a signal—
a collapse—a short recovery; then—

THE WIFE

Then?

THE PHYSICIAN (*slowly*)
The end.

THE WIFE (*losing control*)

Oh, God, God—I can't bear it! I
can't—I can't—I can't! Not this way!
Oh, Christ, come to me, come to him,
come to us! You can't let him go this
way! For our boy's sake, come to him—
and show him—and take him, when he
must go—take him to You!

(*During the woman's outburst, THE
PHYSICIAN goes over to the window and
throws back the curtains. The horizontal
rays of the late afternoon sinking sun
shoot into the room. Suddenly the wom-
an's sobs are checked. Her words stop.
She stands transfixed, immovable, her gaze
fastened on the wall opposite the window.*)

THE PHYSICIAN (*stepping anxiously
toward her*)

Mrs. Rayburn!

THE WIFE (*her eyes riveted on the wall,
her voice far off and strange*)
Look!

(*THE PHYSICIAN'S eyes follow hers. On
the right wall is the shadow of a small
cross.*)

THE DYING MAN (*regaining conscious-
ness; in a mumbled tone*)
Life—life—I want to live.

THE WIFE (*throwing herself at his feet and
pointing to the wall*)

Jim—Jim—see—proof—a miracle!

(*Slowly THE DYING MAN'S gaze fastens
itself to the woman's arm, to her finger, to
the wall, to the sign of the cross.*)

THE WIFE

A miracle!

THE DYING MAN (*slowly bringing his
eyes away from the wall and gradually
sweeping them in a semicircle around
the room until they rest upon the table
at his side*)

A miracle?

(*His eyes meet the candelabrum. With
a weak hand, he gropes for it, reaches it
and sends it crashing to the floor. As the
candelabrum falls, the shadow of the cross
on the wall (the reflection of the candela-
brum) disappears.*)

A miracle? A candlestick!

(*Even as THE DYING MAN'S words
are on his lips, and even as the sign of
the cross disappears from the wall with
the toppling over of the candelabrum,
the shadow of another cross—larger than the
first—takes its place. THE DYING MAN'S
eyes set upon it. HIS WIFE with a wild
cry sinks to the floor at his feet. THE
PHYSICIAN makes to go to her.*)

THE DYING MAN (*half rising in his
chair*)

A sign—a miracle—Christ, I believe!

(*The sign of the cross becomes larger,
clearer.*)

Forgive me!

(*The shadow of the cross becomes still
larger, still clearer.*)

I BELIEVE AT LAST!

(*He lifts himself up for a second and
then—a pause—he falls back—dead. At
this moment, a shout of laughter is heard
in the direction of the veranda, and the
man's LITTLE SON runs into the room
through the broad low window holding
aloft a large Japanese bird kite.*)

HIS LITTLE SON (*breathless*)

Oh, papa! Will you come out and
hold my kite for me till Bobby flies it?
I ain't big enough. I can't hold it up
high.

(*THE PHYSICIAN goes to the child, puts
his arm on the lad's shoulder and quietly
takes the kite from his wondering hands.
And as he does so, the sign of the cross,
now twice as large as before—the reflection
of the child's cross-shaped kite in the sharp
sunlight—fades from the wall. A silent,
hushed moment, and the curtain slowly
falls.*)

LE DÉMON DE LA CURIOSITÉ

Par Paul Margueritte

VOUS ne connaissez pas Brédif? Vous m'étonnez. Brédif? Voyons, avec son nez en trompe humant l'air, ses larges oreilles ouvertes à tous bruits, et ces étonnants petits yeux aigus qui vrillent, qui fouillent, qui découvrent tout ce qu'il lui plaît de savoir.

Quel type! Brédif, ou le curieux passionné. Car il est curieux comme on naît avare ou joueur. Il a tout vu: l'Amérique et le Kamchatka.

Brédif a le don d'ubiquité. Voyagez-vous? Vous êtes sûr de le rencontrer à l'Escorial, ou devant le Persée de la Loggia de Florence, ou contemplant, à Amsterdam, les canaux verdâtres. Pas une première parisienne où il ne soit. Dans les diners, Brédif est l'invité providentiel, qui détient l'anecdote et le dernier potin.

S'agit-il de la Saglieri, la grande ballerine de la saison italienne? Mon Brédif:

—Rien n'est plus vrai, elle a six doigts au pied gauche; c'est pour cela qu'elle paraît plus légère quand elle pirouette sur le droit. Oui, j'ai compté: six doigts, dont le pouce, un jour où j'ai eu l'honneur de m'agenouiller devant elle, comme remplaçant de son pédicure.

Et Brédif—c'est le plus étonnant!—ne ment pas. Tout au plus arrange-t-il, en artiste. Le fond reste vrai: un canevas précis, sur lequel il brode. Mais si légèrement!

Brédif fait de la police privée, pour son plaisir, comme ce personnage d'Edgar Poë qui résout les mystères les plus troublants. Il fait bon être de ses amis. Il saurait retrouver les cambrioleurs de votre villa, ou vous renseigner sur les dettes de votre futur gendre. Il pourrait inscrire sur ses cartes de vis-

ite: "Renseignements confidentiels, recherches, enquêtes, testaments, mariages."

Avec cela, ou malgré cela, galant homme. Car si sa curiosité l'entraîne loin, il sait parfois se taire. D'ailleurs, son épée pique autant que sa langue; il a eu quatre duels, tous heureux et un spirituel, car il trouva le moyen de traverser le gros Triquemal, qui se défilait trop, dans le gras du bas du dos: rognons en brochette!

Depuis, on se méfie.

Quoi qu'il fasse, Brédif ne peut être partout à la fois. Je le savais cloué à Saint-Germain par un accès de goutte, quand fut commis l'étonnant et double assassinat du train Gênes-Milan. Rarement affaire passionna autant: la qualité des victimes d'abord, et aussi les circonstances inexplicables du crime... Les journaux s'en donnèrent: manchettes énormes, reporters sur les dents, éditions supplémentaires braillées à pleine gorge.

—Pends-toi, Brédif! songeai-je.

Sur quoi, je le rencontrai, assis à une petite table et seul, dans un restaurant du boulevard. Gaillard, et me conviant à son côté, il commanda un menu à défier la goutte et du même coup l'entérite, la gravelle et l'apoplexie: turbot gratiné, médaillons de riz de veau, entrecôte braisée, petits pois à la crème, suprême de volaille et salade russe.

—Eh bien, mon pauvre Brédif; manquée, cette fois?

—Quoi, l'affaire Hirscheimer? Mais j'y ai assisté, mon cher. J'ai même tout vu, et nul que moi n'en connaît le secret.

Brédif, depuis longtemps, ne m'étonne plus. Cette fois-ci, tout de même!...

J'ouvris de grands yeux.

—Non?

—Mais si! D'abord, il faut que vous sachiez que j'ai été soigner ma goutte à Monte-Carlo. Les réactions du moral sur le physique: excellent, cela! Le lendemain, je quittais ma pantoufle; le surlendemain, je dansais le cake-walk. Il est vrai que je venais de gagner quinze mille francs.

"Je n'étais pas le seul. Hirscheimer, le gros banquier bavarois, gagnait juste dix fois autant, soit cent cinquante mille. Je le revois, énorme, devant le tapis vert. Son crâne en œuf d'autruche, ses yeux en poche, ses gigantesques moustaches, sa face de brutalité camuse et sournoise, et ses mains, d'horribles pattes de crabe qui ramenaient or et billets d'un geste convulsif.

"En face de lui, une autre figure me fascinait: pâle, fine, trahissant l'épuisement d'une race avec ses paupières meurtries, ses rides fines qui soulignaient l'usure de cette jeunesse brûlée à toutes les passions; je la reconnus pour celle du prince Orbellonni. Il jouait gros jeu et perdait coup sur coup. Sa fine moustache de chat se relevait sur un rictus affreux, ses yeux giauxques exprimaient à la fois le vertige du meurtre et du suicide. Il déchira tout à coup avec ses dents son mouchoir et, ses dernières pièces d'or raflées, se levant, raide comme un automate, gagna la porte et disparut.

"Je ne pensais déjà plus à ces contrastes, si fréquents en pareil lieu, quand, le lendemain, à la gare où j'achetai des journaux avant d'aller passer la soirée à Nice, Hirscheimer arriva, important, bouffi de morgue, bousculant brutalement portiers, porteurs de valises et employés. Il prenait son billet pour Milan, et quand il ouvrit son portefeuille, ce ne fut pas une liasse, mais un matelas de billets de banque qu'il étala imprudemment.

"Je surpris alors, fixé sur lui, un regard noir et inquiétant; un homme blême et mince se tenait auprès de nous. Se sentant observé, après une courte hésitation, il s'éloigna, puis revint au guichet.

"C'était le prince Orbellonni.

"Une rumeur grandit: le rapide d'Italie entra en gare. Aussitôt une impulsion irrésistible s'empara de moi.

Représentez-vous votre ami Brédif, seul dans son compartiment, l'œil collé avec précaution au judas de verre triangulaire.

"En face, au coin, dans le compartiment voisin, Hirscheimer dort, pesamment, les mains croisées sur sa bedaine, la poche intérieure de son veston gonflée par son monstrueux portefeuille. Dans le coin obliquement opposé, Orbellonni veille. Et un voyageur vague, muni d'une énorme barbe rousse, passe et repasse dans le couloir d'un air de surveiller le tout. Le prince le regarde en dessous avec une suspicion rageuse. Que fait là ce gêneur?

"Bon! Il ne revient plus, il s'est calé ailleurs. Hirscheimer dort toujours. Orbellonni, avec des gestes silencieux, ouvre son nécessaire de cuir et en tire un couteau de voyage, dont il ouvre la grande lame.

"Un éclair bref, le couteau brandi se lève sur la gorge du dormeur. Une seconde encore...

"Voilà le jour; renversé sur les cous-sins, quelqu'un a la gorge crevée et nage dans le sang. Mais c'est Orbellonni. La portière de l'autre côté pend, ouverte et rompue; la place est vide: plus d'Hirscheimer. Vous savez le reste. On le retrouva étranglé et aplati sous le tunnel, les poches retournées, sans son portefeuille. A côté d'Orbellonni, les poches également retournées, une fausse barbe, de couleur rousse, trempait dans le sang. Et on ne retrouva jamais le singulier voyageur que j'avais remarqué dans le couloir.

—D'où vous concluez, Brédif?

—Qu'Hirscheimer a tué Orbellonni, et que le voyageur—qui de l'autre côté du compartiment devait se tenir au guet—a étranglé et dépouillé Hirscheimer, puis l'a précipité par la portière. Qu'est devenu le mystérieux assassin? Nul ne le sait. Mais j'espère bien, moi, le découvrir un jour. Et à ne vous rien cacher, j'ai des indices.

Brédif là-dessus avala une gorgée de pomard, puis me regarda, simple et grand, avec le sourire.

THE BURBLING OF THE BARDS

By H. L. Mencken

CALL off the dogs and let in the poets! Some of them have been waiting in the antechamber since 'way last spring—all through the long, sticky days of summer, sitting there in their shirtsleeves, tinkling their dulcimers, chasing flies; all through the tawny days of autumn, while falling acorns called them to the woods in vain; all through the scowling days of this past unearthly winter, damning the weather, chattering prosody, scraping the sad, sad violin. It has cost me forty dollars a week for their victualing and medical attendance, and they have drunk three hundred carboys of my malt liquor and smoked two tons of my tobacco. Twice they have fought with harps, fiddle bows and chair legs. Thrice some ancient among them has gasped his last dactyl and ceased to trouble, again to my cost and inconvenience. Four times I have had to send in a preacher to unite some bachelor bard to a blushing poetess, and my waiter to pass around the chicken salad and harlequin blocks. . . . Time flies. These unions may have their blessings and usufructs. I am no trained nurse, no pediatrician, no connoisseur of colic. I open the door and have done with them before it is too late. . . .

But one at a time! One at a time! Don't crowd, ladies and gentlemen! And kindly observe the signs upon the wall: "No Smoking" and "Silentium!" Here is a young man who launches at once into his lay, passionately, pathetically—and I haven't even heard his name:

Ah, the poor working girl,
May God defend her!
Her heart is so pure and so tender—
Alas, do you wonder at crime?

April, 1913—10

Back he goes, head over heels, and then down the long, long chute. Who comes second? A poet with a thick scroll entitled "TRUTH WILL OUT" (*Broadway Pub. Co.*). I get his name as Prof. Seymour Supercern. Way for Prof. Supercern! Oyez, oyez! And so he begins:

Terrestrial gravitation is an action brought about
By the self-same molecules imbruing earth,
within and without,
As well as things upon the earth, endowed with
attracting force,
Matter attracting matter, as Earth wends its
skyey course.
But why, thou queryest, since Earth has cen-
trifugality,
A phase of axial motion, should not things be
hurled forth free? .

Because, kind sir, the attracting force of earth
'pon objects, things,
Upon its surface is too strong for objects to
take wings.
The higher from the earth you go, the less
th' attractive force,
But thou canst not escape—

Don't delude yourself, dear Seymour. Escape is easier than you fancy. A nod, the yanking of a lever—and you follow along after the anonymous weeper of working girls.

Before you have passed Block Signal No. 1, Prof. Robert Boggs is introduced, and the librarian is signing a receipt for his slim tome, "THE IDYLL OF LUCINDA PEARL" (*Broadway Pub. Co.*). Thus Robert, once he has cleared his throat:

Ah, she was beautiful standing there,
Twisting and twining her beautiful hair;
Twisting and twining it,
Twisting and twining it,
Making a web of it,
A web to ensnare
The hearts of men,

To fill with despair
The souls of men.

Ah, such eyes, such wonderful eyes,
That looking on man would make him unwise.

Good-bye, Robert! Take keer o' yourself! Don't yell—it won't hurt you! Besides, here is Prof. William B. Arvine trying to make himself heard—Prof. Arvine with his "HANG-UP PHILOSOPHY" (*Poet Lore Co.*), all about Euphrosyne, Pergolese, Stradella, Spinoza, Ignota and Dolorosa. But when he sings, it is a very simple song, to wit:

A night like this
Breathes naught but bliss
For loving souls on sea and land;
Dost feel the pressure of my hand?
Oh, answer with a kiss!

Soft, luscious stuff! Caressing, agreeable bosh! More soothing, and by far, than the lines of the lady poet, Miss Cumorah Smith Burns, whose metrical romance, "A CHILD OF LOVE" (*Sherman-French*), seems to deal chiefly with a surgical operation. Thus the patient's anticipatory fears:

The dawn passed away with the rise of the sun,
And then in the hallway a whistle blew one;
A nurse all in white quickly rushed past the door,
And then back again where she had been before.
This whistle—what could its weird meaning have meant?

A shudder of terror o'er her heart was sent;
She turned, gave a cough in relief to her fear,
And just in an instant the kind nurse stood near.

Alas, I cannot tell you what the meaning of the whistle could have meant, nor can I tell you what Prof. Hervey White, of Woodstock, N. Y., means by "flaking flocculence" and "resounding sound." Can a thing be flocculent, and yet not flake? Or resounding, and be no sound? I doubt it. I also doubt that Hervey, if he had it to do over again, would rhyme "coffee" with "trophy," as he does in "A SHIP OF SOULS" (*Maverick Press*), or "friends" with "citizens," or "have 'em" with "Heaven," or "law" with "papa." Again, is it fair, is it decent, is it manly to rhyme "water" with "potter," "married" with "buried"? For shame, good Hervey! And yet, for all that, his singing is the best we have heard so far this day, and now and then he gets genuine lyre music into it. Hear him:

My rose tree bloomed, my garden was fair,
(Heart, heart, hast thou no ken that other hearts are weeping?)

I walked out in the balmy perfumed air.
(Be still, my heart, thankful that thou art dead.)

Swift winds drave by my tortured garden tree,
(Heart, heart, hast thou no ken that other winds are blowing?)

There was no longer any flower for me.
(Be still, my heart, thankful that thou art dead.)

And so on and so on. There is sadness here. The poet sees life as a boundless ocean and man as a storm-tossed barque. He has tears to shed. He sheds them. But even so, he is more comforting than the maudlin optimists who fill the magazines with variations upon Browning's pious piffle:

God's in His heaven,
All's well with the world!

And more comforting, by far, than Mrs. Lillian Bayard Taylor Kiliani's bad translations, in "A SHEAF OF POEMS" (*Badger*). For example, this rendering of Heine's "The Grenadiers":

Two grenadiers, captured in Russian Campaign,
Toward France were plodding aweary;
And when they in Germany quarter had ta'en,
Their spirits were saddened and dreary.

Here, indeed, we have unconscious burlesque, which is the saddest thing under the sun. If we must have burlesque, let it be of the conscious sort. More especially, of the sort manufactured with such humor by Prof. Franklin P. Adams, who now enters with a seltzer siphon under one arm and his new book, "IN OTHER WORDS" (*Double-day-Page*), under the other. First Prof. Adams lines out the German original, beginning thus:

Hör ich das Liedchen klingen,
Das einst die Liebste sang—

And then he proceeds to his extravagant, super-kilianish "translation":

Hear I the songlet singing
That once the dearest sang,
From out my breast upspringing
There comes wild painful pang.

Impels me one dark languish
That high wood to attain,
Dissolves in teardrops' anguish
My extraordinary pain.

Three more such bits of fooling, and then a series of apt and racy variations upon themes by Horace, Martial, Propertius, Catullus, Milton, Southey, Tennyson, Villon and John Howard Payne, all intoned in a rich New Yorkese, so that Q. H. Placcus's "*Jupiter urget*" becomes "*Jupiter oiget*" and the Tiberina sung by Sex. Aurelius Propertius is changed to Tiboinia. But despite his faults of elocution, this F. Potassium Adamus gives a bully show, believe me. Among all the newspaper minnesingers of our fair land, he is one who stands out head and shoulders above the rest—a rhymester of superlative cleverness, a master of complex and ludicrous meters, a genuinely funny fellow. He has a Gilbertian skill at bending words to fit his measures; he has all of Praed's fluency and grace; he gets into his slightest nonsense that highly sophisticated humor which was the flavor of Eugene Field.

I wish we could sit and listen to him for half an hour—particularly to his slangy renderings of Horace, his excellent ballades and triolets, his experiments in fantastic rhyming, his penetrating imitations of the magnificoes of song. But the impatient Neo-Celts and Poets of Passion out in the ante-chamber are clubbing one another with their *viols da gamba*, and so he must be on his way. A strophe in parting from his "Christmas Comes But Once a Year," as the late Al Swinburne would have written it:

Thou hast bared thy breast to the boreal breezes,
Sibilant, stark, as the soul of sin,
Chill and cheap as a Cheshire cheese is,
Gloriously glad as an elinorglyn!
Winds that whisper and winds that whistle,
Faster far than the phantom of fear.
O Dolores, the toe of mistle!
Christmas comes—and but once a year!

So long, F. P. A.! We'd weep for you even more if it were not that the next comer is Robert Loveman, up for the day from Dalton, Ga., to read us some of his lyrics. If you don't know Loveman's "April Rain," you don't know one of the loveliest songs done in English in our time. Maybe, if we ask him politely, he will recite it. Yes? Then *silentium!*

It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining daffodils;
In every dimpled drop I see
Wild flowers on the hills;
The clouds of gray engulf the day
And overwhelm the town;
It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining roses down.

It isn't raining rain to me,
But fields of clover bloom,
Where every buccaneering bee
May find a bed and room;
A health unto the happy!
A fig for him who frets!—
It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining violets.

How simple! And yet what lush and magic beauty in that very simplicity! Analyze it, break it to pieces, examine its structure and method, and you will be performing an autopsy upon a butterfly—with a crowbar. Such exquisite things do not bear the prodding and vivisection of criticism. They are the ultimate corpuscles of music, unicellular organisms, embodying all there is of song in next to nothing. This one has been a favorite of mine since I first found it in a stray newspaper, eight or ten years ago. It floats around in my mind along with half a dozen other such fragments of sheer delight—Eva Gore-Booth's "The Roads of Cloonagh," William Watson's "April," Miss Reese's "Tears," Kipling's "Dirge of Dead Sisters," broken reminiscences of Henley, Kingsley and Christina Rossetti. I do not try to explain and defend these things intellectually; I merely tell you that they caress and enchant me emotionally. You, yourself, I dare say, have other favorites. But if, by any chance, no Loveman song is among them, then I advise you to go recruiting in his six slim volumes. Attend him:

Night is a deep black rose,
Steep'd in sweets to the lees,
Full of the loves and woes
Of swarming starry bees.

Lo, now, upon the air,
Forth from her dusk cocoon,
Fragile, and faint, and fair,
Flutters the white moth moon.

Attend:

Take these timid violets,
Weeping with the dew;
Shy as tricky triolets,
All for you, for you.

To your bosom hold them,
Whispering my cares;
In your heart enfold them,
Heed their purple prayers.

And yet again:

What for the fagot's flame?
What for the hate and wrong?
Lord God, I bless Thy name,
I, suffering, am strong.

But, Father, in Thy grace,
Keep from woe's wild unrest,
The woman and the baby face,
Soft pillowed on her breast.

Little things, inconsidered trifles, mere wisps of song. And yet I know of no American poet, save it be Miss Reese, who can get so much of the perfume of true poesy into such tiny blossoms. Read the charming octaves in "The Gates of Silence" and "Songs from a Georgia Garden," forgetting all the current critical gabble about "sustained efforts." Some of them, I have no doubt, will not please you—Love-man's worst is made almost scandalous by his best—but upon others you will fall as upon heart-warming discoveries. Most of the things in his latest book, "ON THE WAY TO WILLOWDALE" (*Showalter*), I myself do not like. They are too often careless, bad in form. But they take nothing from the perfect singing that has gone before, and that is still, I hope and believe, to come after.

A posse of lady bards! Pass the macaroons and Bohea, Herr Oberkellner, and tell George Nathan to take his feet off the bookcase. First up is Miss Alice Harper, who begins with a quotation from Aristophanes's Cockney Greek and proceeds to read various graceful stanzas with Latin and Italian names—"Via Lucis," "L'Ammalato," "Stabat Mater Gloriosa," "Umiltà del Grand' Amor." Graceful and correct, but I cannot say more. Miss Harper's inspiration, indeed, is far from a divine frenzy, revolving the lambent eye. It does not flash and roar; it merely glows. And so it produces only bookish and familiar things: "the inner beauty of the mind," "the arching sky," "the high resolve," "fortune's fond caress," "the hallowed mound," "the surging sea." Undistinguished, too, are most of the

"WAYSIDE BLOSSOMS" of Mrs. Mary Matthews Bray (*Badger*). Here the roving orb alights upon "cherished landmarks," "sandy shore," "sounding sea," "freshening breezes," "hurrying throng," "solemn stillness" and many other such old, old friends. But a song that comes close to genuine lyrical beauty redeems these hopeless commonplaces. Let us hear three strophes:

If I could know, beyond all vain surmising,
Beyond all doubt and fear,
That thou hast found some place of high endeavor,
Some world of hope and cheer;

Some homelike shelter, where with force unhindered,
Thy nature may unfold,
And its bright promise yield a richer fruitage,
Than our sealed eyes behold;

I might let fall the burden of this grieving,
This weight that lays me low;
And go with patience, onward to the ending,
Content no more to know.

Most of the other lady bards, I regret to say, climb little higher the Parnasian slope. The quatrains in Miss Leila Peabody's "LITTLE BOOK OF VERSE" (*Sherman-French*) are safe, sane and obvious. So:

I chased that shy bird, Happiness,
Nor paused for food or rest;
Then, when at last I gave her up,
She nestled in my breast!

And of the same neutral quality are the songs and fragments in "THE GOLD," by Miss Bessie Russell (*Sherman-French*), and the New Thought dithyrambs in "A CHILD'S GLIMPSE OF GOD," by Dr. Ethel Blackwell Robinson (*Sherman-French*), and the sound magazine verse in "HORIZON SONGS," by Miss Grace Duffield Goodwin (*Sherman-French*). The air is laden with more interesting lays when the arras parts to admit Mesdames Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, Amelia Josephine Burr and Beatrice Irwin, for the first, in "THE CALL OF BROTHERHOOD" (*Scribner*), offers a number of workmanlike sonnets; the second, in "THE ROADSIDE FIRE" (*Doran*), shows some clever tricks with new rhyme schemes; and the third, in "THE PAGAN TRINITY" (*Lane*), is full

of exotic fancies, chiefly Arabic and Japanese. Hear Miss Irwin's "Oria":

Zu-zu-zu-ali,
Atcha-atcha-atcha!

Half of the rainbow I see in the sky,
But the other half I hide in my heart.

Zu-zu-zu-ali,
Atcha-atcha-atcha!

Could I but catch those fleeting, fleeting clouds!
They are my songs—my sisters far away!

Et cetera, et cetera, with many repetitions of "zu-zu-zu" and "atcha-atcha-atcha." I do not say that the color Miss Irwin gets into these fantastic songs is genuinely Arabic or Japanese, but I bear cheerful testimony to the gorgeousness of that color, whatever its origin. She keeps far off the conventional paths: she conjures up some measure of the Oriental glamour and mystery which gave a fleeting fame, a few years back, to the passionate stanzas of Laurence Hope.

But the best of all the fair poets in the present party, and by long, long odds, is Mrs. May Byron, an Englishwoman, who makes even Nathan freeze to attention by reciting a sonorous and splendid prelude to Father Thames, a thing with rhythm in it, and stately images, and the high dignity of sincerity. I wish I could report this "Ballad of London River" in full, and "The Pageant of Seamen" with it, and "The Ballad of Foul-weather Jack," but too many other poets wait. No new song of the sea can fail to recall Kipling's lordly ballads: these things of Mrs. Byron do so, of course. And yet they are far from imitations. A touch of woman's tenderness is in them; they have a quality all their own. And from such chants of empire there is a swift change to gipsy songs, love songs, songs of eerie atmosphere. A few stanzas from one of the last named:

The leaves were blowing red and brown
Beneath the beech trees bare,
When the Dark Maid came to our town
With gold pins in her hair.

The leaves were blowing yellow and gray
In the waning of the moon,
When the Dark Maid came along the way
With silver-buckled shoes.

Her mantle fell like folds of mist,
That rift and shift and change;
Was never wandering lutanist
That played a tune so strange.

And one beheld her whence she came,
Or knew the way she went,
Our hearts being stirred to smoldering flame
Of tenderest discontent.

The leaves were blowing ash and dun
Athwart the edge of night,
When the Dark Maid toward the setting sun
Sang herself out of sight.

And every man, from marvel roused,
Took up his toil again;
How should that fairy joy be housed
In homes of mortal men?

But still against a singing wind
In dreams we follow her—
The Dark Maid never looks behind,
That plays the dulcimer.

A mere experiment in tone color, but one justified, I believe, by abundant success. This Mrs. Byron, indeed, has the authentic gift. She will be heard from later on.

Put beside her "Ballad of London River" and "Pageant of Seamen," the marine music of Prof. J. E. Patterson, in "THE LURE OF THE SEA" (*Doran*), loses all salt and savor. The trouble with J. E. is that he is constantly descending to the trite and commonplace. Let him start a song however sonorously, he is sure to spoil it, in half a minute, with some banal thought, some clumsy line. In brief, he is far more the rhymester than the poet, and so it is sweet sorrow to bid him farewell, for all the flattering press notices that he shows. Press notices mean little: the worst stuff gets the best. Of Prof. Louis How, who now comes in with "THE YOUTH REPLIES" (*Sherman-French*), I can give you an account but little more favorable. The verses he reads are vastly more workmanlike than Prof. Patterson's, but this is the only piece that I order inscribed upon the minutes:

The sea is singing on the beach,
Where it has sung a million years;
Softer than even yours its speech,
Its waves are saltier than your tears.

How many million years to come
Shall tides make yellow shingles wet,
After your voice at last is dumb,
And after even I forget!

Here is grace, indeed, but I get more joy out of the grace of Louis Untermeyer, who warbles sweetly of "FIRST LOVE" (*Sherman-French*), to the accompaniment of a seven-stringed *viola d'amore*. I suspect that Louis has given deep and profitable study to the Cavalier poets, and particularly to Waller, Lovelace and Sir John Suckling. The fruits of this study are visible, not only in the external form and method of his lyrics, but also in their content. They show, in brief, passion tempered by self-consciousness. One feels that the poet is keeping his head, even in the midst of his most extravagant avowals and remonstrances—that he is quite as much determined to make a pretty song as to praise his lady. For example:

My soul is sick of roses,
Of lilies proud and pale—
In scented garden closes
The old-time beauties fail.
And though the spell reposes
On every flower that grows,
My soul is sick of roses
Since she has scorned the rose.

Again:

Mount up my songs, mount up to her
Upon your winged phrases;
Each lyric be a chorister
That only chants her praises.

Or steal into her thoughts and sing
The strains that used to win her,
Until you have revived the Spring
And found the heart within her.

Nearly fourscore such songs are engrossed upon Untermeyer's scroll—flowing, melodious things, almost perfect words for music. And if they do not grip the heart, they at least give an agreeable fillip to the fancy. He writes dulcetly and well; he knows what he is about. But I like him best at the end, for there he comes nearest, I think, to putting his deepest feelings into his verse:

So end the lyrics of my earliest passion—
First love, with all its fever and its fears—
So wakes the new love in a nobler fashion,
So die the little griefs and shallow tears.

But Joy will live and Spring can never perish—
Youth in my heart will burn until I die;
And all the beauties that my soul may cherish
Will fill a richer earth and vaster sky.

For now Love comes with all the early fire,
The exultation and the leaping joy
Blended with something homelier and higher—
Peace and a faith the years cannot destroy.

More poets yet! Prof. William Ellery Leonard, of Madison, Wis., with a thick book, "THE VAUNT OF MEN" (*Huebsch*), into which he has pitched all sorts of things, from commonplace pieces of occasion to very fair lyrics. Samuel Ellsworth Kiser, of Chicago, Ill., with "THE LAND OF LITTLE CARE" (*Volland*), an excellent collection of newspaper verses, usually beginning romantically and ending upon the note of burlesque. Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, of London, Eng., with "FIRES" (*Macmillan*), a book of ballads of lowly life, grim, prosaic, earnest, haunting. Robert V. Carr, of Los Angeles, Cal., with a tome of "COWBOY LYRICS" (*Small-Maynard*). Tom McInnes, of Ottawa, Can., with his "RHYMES OF A ROUNDER" (*Broadway Pub. Co.*), a book of ballades, villanelles and mirelles. Ezra Pound, of Boston, Mass., with a volume of translations from the sonnets and ballads of Guido Cavalcanti, who lived and made his songs in the Tuscany of the thirteenth century (*Small-Maynard*).

Of these books, let me recommend especially those of MM. Carr, McInnes and Pound. The first is notable for its verisimilitude: one finds no difficulty in believing that such crude jingles are the improvisations of genuine cowboys. And there are songs, too, of the ranch as well as of the range—songs full of brooding and loneliness, for all the homeliness of their form. As for Mr. McInnes, he first entertains with an excellent discourse upon the ballade, arguing especially for the relaxation of its rhyme scheme, and then he shows what he can do with it, and with the villanelle, the mirelle and the cantel. He has got into his ballades, not merely a correct structure, but also the right spirit. They are cynical, jocular and devil-may-care: three-fourths of them might be paraphrases of François Villon. I wish I could let the poet recite some of them—say the ballades of Sleep, of Faith, of the Picaroon and of Waiting, and the mirelles of the Lady of Ventures and the

Good Bed with them—but the afternoon goes glimmering and there is no time for it. Nor for the mystical, medieval sonnets that Mr. Pound has brought into English from good Guido. Next time we meet, by the way, I hope that Mr. Pound will be on hand with some of his own compositions. He is an excellent translator, but a far better poet. Certainly you have not so soon forgotten his ballads of the Gibbet and of the Goodly Fere!

So out go the six and in come three more: the Hon. Herbert Ferguson, with his "RHYMES OF ELD" (*Sherman-French*), a book of ballads, sometimes humorous; James Newton Matthews, with "THE LUTE OF LIFE" (*Horton*); and Thomas G. Devine, with "MADAWASKA" (*Badger*). A few strophes from the last named:

Came the nimble Weasel creeping;
Came the Squirrel leaping, keeping
To the treetops; came the 'Munk;
Came the Rabbit and the Skunk,
Friskingly and whiskingly;

Came the flat-tailed Beaver stealing;
Came the sly Mink squealing, wheeling;
Came the Otter sleek and fat;
Came the Marten and the Rat,
Airily and warily;

Came the Eagle soaring, sailing;
Came the wild Goose railing, wailing;
Came the Loon, the Duck and Hen
From the dank grass of the fen,
Flappingly and clappingly;

Came the Partridge whirring, drumming;
Came the Pigeon trumming, humming;
Came the Crow with measured wing;
Came each lesser feathered thing,
Chattering and clattering.

And so on and so on. One by one the wild things answer the call of Opeongo, mother to Madawaska, the Hidden Water. Trouble has fallen upon the forest: a Stranger has bobbed up, "strange of limb and feature":

Like the Black Bear angered, standing;
Crafty as the Fox and wary;
Like the hungry Wolf pack, banding;
Neither feathered, neither hairy.

I leave you to guess the name of the Stranger. Meanwhile the Hon. Mr. Devine deserves a round of polite applause—if not for his execution, then at least for his plan. Among rhymesters

who devote themselves chiefly to imitating one another, so that the fire of inspiration pales at last to a mere phosphorescence, he is one who strikes out into new paths and unburdens his soul in a fashion all his own.

One considerable poet remains—Prof. John G. Neihardt, to wit—and to me, at least, he seems the best of them all. Prof. Neihardt was with us last year, reading stately and beautiful things from his "Man-Song." Now he comes with a new book, "THE STRANGER AT THE GATE" (*Kennerley*), sixty-seven pages of verse so full of music that it falls upon my ear like the sound of harps and fiddles, and so earnest and dignified that I rise involuntarily as the poet intones it. Not, indeed, that I agree with all the doctrines he preaches. Far from it! I grieve to hear him blaspheming money, that one true heart among all my friends; I lament to hear him singing, even so majestically, of Red Winds, Justice, the System and other such Socialistic fauna. But when he forgets his politics and carols only of beautiful things, then I am for him enthusiastically and reverently. Thus his hymn to the young poet, jeered at by shopman and clown:

You lip the awful flagons of old time,
And mystic apples lure you to the bite!
Blown down the dizzy winds of woven rhyme,
Dead women come and woo you in the night!

You tread the myrtle woods past time and place,
Where shadows flit and splendidechoes croon;
And through the boughs some fatal storied face
Breathes muted music like a summer moon!

I know the secret altars where you kneel;
I know what lips fling fever in your kiss.
That sorry little drab to whom you steal
Is Queen Semiramis!

Twelve such resonant and splendid stanzas. A poem so near perfection that its dismemberment, even in the service of praise, is a crime. Get the book and read it all. And read, too, that companion piece, "The Poet's Town"—a superb variation upon the same theme:

Sipper of ancient flagons,
Often the lonesome boy
Saw in the farmers' wagons
The chariots hurled at Troy.

And once when the rich man's daughter,
Smiled at the boy at play,
Sword-storms, giddy with slaughter,
Swept back the ancient day!

War steeds shrieked in the quiet,
Far and hoarse were the cries;
And oh, through the din and the riot,
The music of Helen's eyes!

Rich with the dreamer's pillage,
An idle and worthless lad,
Least in a prosy village,
But prince in Allahabad;

Lover of golden apples,
Munching a daily crust;
Hunter of dream-built chapels,
Worshipping in the dust;

Dull to the worldly duty,
Less to the town he grew,
And more to the God of Beauty
Than ever the grocer knew!

Corn for the buyers, and cattle—
But what could the dreamer sell?
Echoes of cloudy battle?
Music from heaven and hell?

Spices and bales of plunder,
Argosied over the sea?
Tapestry woven of wonder,
And myrrh from Araby?

None of your dream stuffs, Fellow,
Looter of Samercand!
Gold is heavy and yellow,
And value is weighed in the hand!

Once in a cycle the comet
Doubles its lonesome track;
Enriched with the tears of a thousand years,
Æschylus wanders back.

Ever inweaving, returning,
The near grows out of the far;
And Homer shall sing once more in a swing
Of the austere Polar Star.

Then what of the lonesome dreamer
With the lean blue flame in his breast?
And who was your clown for a day, O Town,
The strange, unbidden guest?

But enough of quotation! You must read Neihardt for yourself. He and Loveman are the indubitable poets of this present boiling—the one with his psalms and psalter, the other with his shepherd's reeds.

Neither is represented in "THE LYRIC YEAR" (Kennerley), a collection already

debated *ad nauseam* in the newspapers. I do not add to your distress by going over the ground again. All I want to do, before space runs out, is to record my belief that the prize poem, "Second Avenue," by Orrick Johns, is one of the best of the hundred. So far as I know, this is the first time that such a prize has gone to a poem of genuine merit. The custom is to award it to some vague and piffish masterpiece by a poet who is never heard of again. But here we see the money going to one who really has something to say, and who says it with reasonable grace and clarity. The sole thing I lament is that the judges were so cold to the makers of lyrics. There are several excellent songs in the book. For example, Sara Teasdale's "I Shall Not Care." For example, Shaemus O'Sheel's "He Whom a Dream Hath Possessed." For example, Fannie Stearns Davis's "Comrades." I also like Louis Untermeyer's "Caliban in the Coal Mines" and Harry Kemp's "I Sing the Battle." But here mere whim is speaking—and prejudice against the yardstick. "Second Avenue" calls for no apology from the judges. . . .

So the last poet bows himself out, and I am left with the cigarette butts and the empty beer bottles. No more of song for a year!

But take time during the coming year to read thoroughly "POETRY AND DREAMS," by F. C. Prescott (*Badger*), an extremely sagacious and interesting discourse upon the whole subject of lyric beauty. Why is Kipling's "Mandalay" so moving? What is the essential charm of Loveman's "April Rain"? How are we to track down the loveliness of Watson's "Oh, Like a Queen," and Waller's "Go, Lovely Rose," and Lunder's "The Four Winds"? What is there in common between Whitman's "My Captain" and Browning's "The Last Ride Together," a rondeau by Austin Dobson and a sonnet by John Keats? Here you will find an attempt to answer these questions—and to me, at least, it seems an attempt which comes very close to success.

WHAT ABOUT EDWARD SHELDON?

By George Jean Nathan

IN the first place, peremptorily to allay any yokel suspicions of envy or jealousy on my part—probably induced by the fact that we are practically of an age and that he gets several hundred more complimentary press clippings a day from Romeike than I get—not to mention several thousand times the annual share of beautiful ladies' embraces, free meals and piasters—let me state frankly and candidly that I would gladly change places with Mr. Edward Sheldon.

And in the second place, in order to justify this admirably straightforward admission in a manner somewhat complimentary to myself, let me state that were Edward Sheldon George Jean Nathan and George Jean Nathan Edward Sheldon, George Jean Nathan (however much he might fail to accomplish—and it would probably be a very, very great deal) would at least not confuse himself in the certain and several salient points in the coping with which Mr. Sheldon has bewildered himself.

The resident lumped impression of the plays of Mr. Sheldon is of a Presidential candidate making an amorous assault upon some more or less chaste wench to the tune of "The Star-Spangled Banner" rendered by a serenading band outside the house under a balcony to which the Presidential candidate presently will step and make a speech. The lingering impressions of Mr. Sheldon as a playwright are of a gilded bass drum being pounded violently in the still corridors of the Louvre; of the Harvard bleachers singing Des Grieux's "*E ascose fibre vanno a carezzare*" from "Manon Lescaut" in the midst of a football engagement with Yale; of a bunch of violets

in a glass of rye whiskey; of "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep" played upon the upper octaves of an harmonica; of overalls worn over a pair of modish white flannel trousers; of H. L. Mencken actually enjoying lemonade.

Let me warn you, however, before I proceed, not to mistake me! Whatever his deficiencies, remittent droll logic, poses and achromatism, whatever his odor of bookshelf adventure, this same Mr. Sheldon is so far in advance of the majority of men, young or old, writing for the stage in this country—so far ahead of them in the matter of scrivening skill, a courage honest so far as it goes, a willingness for native thematic exploration and a sense of characterization, that he may be forgiven much. The difficulty with Mr. Sheldon, however, is not that he is young (the charge that is regularly lodged against him by those of our newspaper critics who already have one foot in the grave, but who, even in this supposedly enlightened age, are still regarded as authorities on the strength of the important fact that they can remember having seen Lotta Crabtree at Niblo's Garden in 1864); but that his viewpoint, instead of being analogously young and consequently vivid and sane and vital, is too often old—and consequently both ventriloquistic and erroneous.

He looks upon the realism of modernity with the eyes of a Moritz von Schwind, upon the throbbing romance of modernity with the eyes of a Jean Louis Meissonier. He confuses his paints; his analyses of theme and character are too frequently redolent of the *passé* analyses and deductions of such archaic revolutionary *sans-culottes* as

the younger Dumas, Victorien Sardou, Stanley Houghton, Augustus Thomas, Israel Zangwill, Henri Bernstein, Pierre Wolff, Sydney Grundy, Hall Caine, Henri Bataille, Basil Macdonald Hastings ("The New Sin" 1912; "Is Suicide a Sin?" by Robert G. Ingersoll, 1885), Wilson Barrett or Henri Lavedan.

He gives one the idea of believing what he reads in books (the first sign of mental old age and correlative sterility of imagination and thought); of holding sex and drama to be invariably synonymous, when the truth is that, in the theater, sex has some time since to a great degree become comedy. In each and every one of his plays, with the solitary exception of "The High Road"—in "Salvation Nell," in "The Nigger," in "The Boss," in "Egypt," in "The Princess Zim Zim," and now in "ROMANCE," he has figured out his stellar dramatic moment (or what some of our reporters call the "punch") in terms of a male visiting fierce physical assault upon a female. And, in each instance, the generating impulse of the male has been nothing more than a plump and unemoliated lust. On no occasion has there been fused with this incalescence any urbanity or intelligence of purpose of the Brioux sort; on no occasion have these deputy climaxes possessed any decenter justification than a titillation of the drooping vertebræ of mild old men and a driving giddy of the cranial contents of very young girls.

Such immedicable proscenium patterns of yesterday as "Shenandoah," "The Conquerors," "The Queen of the Highbinders" and the like were given to precisely this same Sheldon habit; indeed, unless memory errs, the first act of the Bronson-Howard specimen, the middle act of the Paul Potter exhibition and the central moment of the quoted melodrama revealed what some of my venerable colleagues are fond of calling "Sheldon's strength" while Mr. Sheldon was still at an age where he said his prayers. Sex, to repeat, has ceased to be dramatic. Nor is passion the synonym of romance. Paul Bourget and Balzac, Weininger and Ellis and a thousand other noble physicians—if he were

still sufficiently young in mind to read them with penetration and constructive inference—would provide Mr. Sheldon much juicy meat for speculation.

Three more items. First, Mr. Sheldon's method of descriptive sentimental writing. His favorite recipe: "the stars, the perfume of the night breeze, the orange-colored moon, the violets in the Boulevard St. Germain—the tinkle of a distant mandolin" et cetera ad infinitum. What fragrant hackerei! Surely Mr. Sheldon is young enough to know better. This magazine alone rejects at least sixty "love story" manuscripts every day that reek with this species of semile mush. Above every other cheaply effective form of writing, this is the easiest; any amateur can do it. I do not except even Henry Van Dyke. The stars, the moon, the flowers and soft music in the distance are a sadly overworked company.

Second, Mr. Sheldon's recent attempt to invest his writings with a loftier air than actually is theirs by inserting his dialogue in the mouths of important proscenium personages such as governors of States, great newspaper owners, famous painters, leaders of suffrage movements, powerful bankers, noted clergymen and famous opera singers. This coy subterfuge is perfectly transparent and a bit naive. Certainly, Mr. Sheldon, you are still young enough to realize that the so-regarded important personages of the nation rarely have anything important to say. The drama of life, the shaking logic of life, the pain and the joy of life, come from the John Smiths. Where is there any fresh new thought or fresh new drama to be had from the Pierpont Morgans or the Rockefellers, the Lyman Abbotts or Dr. Parkhursts, the Mrs. O. H. P. Belmonts or the Mary Gardens? Their life stories, their ideas, are of the literary and dramatic past. There is progress and drama only in the obscure of the world—or in the world's growing children.

Third, Mr. Sheldon's condescending Continental connoisseurish wisdom culled—so is the impression—from the conventional window of the Hotel Bristol in the Place Vendôme; from the conven-

tional cushioned seat of a gondola dreaming its conventional way along the lazy waters of Venice; from the conventional trip through the Musée Carnavalet and the Luxembourg, the conventional taxi voyage through the Bois de Vincennes, the conventional sampling of the *ris de veau à la Toulouse* and of the sun-kissed Haut Brion 1871 in the little garden across the way at Fontainebleau, the conventional view from the Montmartre of "Louise"; and from the conventional pretty, sweet-natured Mademoiselle Ninette of the Marigny promenade or the conventional harder, sterner gaberlunzie of the Boul' Mich' byways. All perfectly obvious, of the smell of the guide book; of "The Stories of the Opéras," of "Famous Masterpieces of Painting." Any incompetent and unimaginative writer may produce a stirring effect upon the American proletariat by such means, but it is deplorable in so skilled a craftsman, so well educated and well bred a gentleman, as Mr. Sheldon.

Instar omnium: Did I desire vastly to impress my readers in the critical review of a play, all I would have to do would be to drop some such remark as "the playwright's characterization of the heroine is in the manner of a Murillo, the light ethereal conception of womanhood, as opposed to the dramaturgic manner of a Correggio with its warm Titian coloring." Of the Murillo and Correggio schools I am supremely ignorant, yet by referring thus to an art guide book, I might make my readers believe that I knew as much about them as I happen accidentally to know about Von Schwind and Meissonier. And as the average American has probably never heard of Von Schwind and Meissonier either, I should be set down (as I fear I sometimes am, despite my normal sincerity) as a "very clever fellow." That I really do resort now and again to this means and practice of making my readers believe I am much more deeply conversant with the fine arts than I actually am, does not alter the case. I am, as the uncourtly modern term has it, onto myself. Mr. Sheldon isn't. That we both succeed in impressing our

audiences profoundly with our trumped-up, spectacularized wisdom is infinitely more to my credit than his. My task is difficult compared to his; for, you see, all he has to do is to impress the dramatic critics.

Mr. Sheldon's latest effort, "ROMANCE," has all the defects and all the virtues of his preceding wares. Like the latter, it reveals little body and small intestinal virtue, although it contains several truly sterling flashes that amount to something akin to the keenest callidity and dramatic adroitness. The latter come in the scene where Rita Cavallini, erstwhile mistress of the banker Van Tuyl, fervidly swears on the Bible to the young clergyman who wishes to make her his wife that there has been nothing between her and the banker; in the subsequent scene where Van Tuyl, the young clergyman's warm and devoted friend, with fine calm and natural worldly candor, lies to the love-lorn young man and assures him that his relations with the opera singer have been wholly innocent; in a scene wherein the proud Cavallini chats easily and amiably with a street organ grinder—"H'm! And why not? He is of my country!"—and in the editing of the scenes wherein the singer recounts her first meeting with love in the arms of Milanese Beppo and wherein she realizes, upon her last meeting with love, that her will has not now the strength to fight against what all her life she has freely surrendered to unless the man will supplement it with his own. More's the pity that in this tale of a bygone romance related by an old bishop to his grandson, and born anew in the aged clergyman's heart by the strains of his lost sweetheart's song in "Mignon," the typical Sheldon basic congeries of super-sentimentality, specious altiloquence and antiquated sense of dramatic crises (for this is 1913 even if his play is laid in the '60's) should extrude itself with depreciating force.

Mr. Sheldon is looked upon widely as one of the most resourceful and fertile of our younger dramatic craftsmen, which, in all conscience, he is; but he might learn much, very much, in the way of

dramatically vibrant tears, of genuine heartaches and genuine smiles, of poignant, compelling simplicity, from the newcome and hitherto unrated Eleanor Gates, whose "Poor Little Rich Girl" (although patently of a different school of writing) stands leagues to the forefront of the best that Sheldon has done. The exigence of space last month prevented me from giving to this last named play the quota of analyzed praise that is its thorough due. May I ask my flock, therefore, to bear with me and accept my word for it? In "ROMANCE," Miss Doris Keane, one of the handful of plainly intelligent and painstaking younger women of the native theater, presents an admirable characterization of the singer. Mr. A. E. Anson is excellent as Van Tuyl; but Mr. William Courtenay, save for his work in the first act in the familiar manner of his Laurence Trenwith of "Iris," is impracticably overparted.

It has been my practice in the past to review the drama of the month with my mind—or at least with what passes current for a mind with the theatrical managers (when I praise their goods). In the light of the quality of several of the specimens presented to me recently for review, however, I see no reason at all why my mind is necessary to the task. Accordingly, in approaching the five following exhibitions, I shall leave my mind to one side (where it may conveniently occupy itself with figuring out the Sisyphean problem of how to persuade my employer that I am worth more money than he is now paying me) and shall review the specimens briefly with my viscera. This notwithstanding Sir Browne in the second chapter of "Religio Medici" that "he that relieves another upon the bare suggestion and bowels of pity doth not this so much for his sake as for his own."

I. "THE UNWRITTEN LAW," by Edwin Milton Royle. In the first act, Fred Morley comes to take Sue Wilson to the theater. Mrs. Wilson takes the young man by the hand, looks at him pathetically, and with a tear-filled voice beseeches him: "Take good care of her, Fred; take good care of her for my

sake!" The stupendous and vital caliber of the emotions of the play may be judged from this momentous episode. The piece possesses not a few startlingly brilliant elements. For example, a little boy in a suit of pajamas praying to God to bring my papa back home safe to me and my mama; a woman who implores a man to give me a wedding ring and put me straight in the cruel eyes of the world; a buxom negro cook in a blue calico apron who periodically ejaculates "My Lawdy!" thereby providing the play with the comedy element; and a jury that returns a verdict of not guilty in favor of the hero in the last act. Were my mind not temporarily occupied in another quarter, I should say that here was the sort of melodrama I as a youngster used to write on the paper that came around the meat, for enactment by the neighbors' children in the loft of our barn.

II. "THE NEW SECRETARY," by François De Croisset. She is sought by many wealthy suitors, but the moment she catches sight of many Him toward the end of the first act you know there isn't a doubt that one year after eleven o'clock Hélène and He will be playing happily with their cute little curly-headed newer secretary somewhere down in the country near Rheims. It is a curious circumstance that on the stage, no matter how many or of what nature or station their suitors, rich girls always fall in love in the following order: 1. With an artist. 2. With a secretary. 3. With a bridge builder. 4. With a man whose brother owns a big sheep ranch in Rhodesia. 5. With an Englishman who several years before single-handed had quelled a mutiny in India. 6. With a lawyer. Of course, in real life, no one ever falls in love with a lawyer. In real life, rich girls always fall in love with a young pimply-faced stockbroker who waltzes divinely, with the clerk at the summer hotel or with the chauffeur. Or, when they don't fall in love, they marry a young man in their own set. On the whole, the play of which I am speaking is approximately as consequent as—well, as considerable of Henri Bergson's philosophy.

III. Mrs. Leslie Carter and her pyrotechnique in "THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY." Two back numbers in a furious physical encounter, with the latter returned victor.

IV. "THE OLD FIRM," by Harry and Edward Paulton. A paraphrase of "Faust" in the Casino libretto spirit of twenty years ago. In the welter of obsolete materials from which the exhibit has been derived there is, however, one element that seems not to deserve the pyrrhonic critical condemnation and depreciation that have been meted out to it. Reference is to the "exits" of the characters. In order to clear the stage of certain personages in the play as certain occasions arise, the playwrights have resorted to such simple dialogic devices as "Come, let us take a walk" and "I'll go and see how things are in the next room"—or something of the innocent sort. Naturally enough, those of our dramatic critics who believe that in real life people never leave rooms save according to a strict technique, are loud in their protests under such circumstances. This is one of the most ridiculous of the many purposeless practices of specious theatrical criticism as indulged in on our shore.

Recently, when an illiterate named Goldknopf was made the butt of a rapacious and scarcely more literate professional public for purposes of press agency and deflection of attention from the basic point of the argument at large, much comical ado was made over the manner in which the poor soul had achieved the exits of his characters. As a matter of pure fact, several of these "exits" were in straight accordance with the actual, if homely, truths of everyday actions, and were, as such, of twice the virtue of such overlauded technical coups as Aubrey's artificial Pinero-planned exit in the Drummie jabbering scene of the first act of "Tanqueray," as Canon Bonsey's highly doubtful exit after the appearance of Felicia Hindemarsch in the conservatory in the first act of Henry Arthur Jones's "Mrs. Dane's Defence," as starving little Fritz's technically all right but naturally unjustified exit in the second act of Hauptmann's "The Weav-

ers"—in short, as any one of many similar purely proscaenic stratagems. If, incidentally, Mr. Henry W. Savage were a man of more discernment and less hysteria—if, for example, he were a man of the calm intelligence of a Charles Frohman—here would be one of a hundred comprehensible subjects upon which he might righteously and reasonably base his arguments against criticism as it is engaged in largely in the United States. Being less a penetrating critic than even the least critic, however, Mr. Savage vibrates because an experienced and acute theatergoer like Alan Dale leaves after the second act of "Everywoman," when, as a matter of record, Mr. Dale had had ample time and leisure to judge the quality of the rest of the exhibit from the book of the play (paper-bound) that Mr. Savage had himself sent to each of the critics a week before the play itself was produced. Let us have done with all such nonsense, whether it emanate from critics or from managers!

V. "PATRIOTS," by Lennox Robinson. The Irish Players in a one-act play played in three acts. The plot of the piece, divided among these acts, may be summed up thus: Act I. O. Act II. O. Act III. An Irish patriot, on leaving prison after an incarceration of eighteen years, comes to see that he has wasted his life and made ruin of it in a cause that is hopeless because of lack of solidified resoluteness and unselfish sacrificial instinct on the part of his fellow countrymen. A babbling exhibit, informed with a valid idea with which the playwright has found himself unable to cope. On the whole, diffuse, devitalized and operose.

Holla! We are come to music shows. The two most diverting of the late installations: the Gaiety importation "THE SUNSHINE GIRL," with the dangerous and alluring Miss Julia Sanderson in a stellar capacity, and "THE HONEYMOON EXPRESS," the new Winter Garden display, with the equally dangerous and alluring Mam'selle Gaby Deslys at the head of the firing line. Ah me, my horse for a kingdom! The first named of these shows is a very considerable

improvement over the Gaiety specimen which I described to you last summer from overseas, and in it Miss Sanderson discloses herself as the most winsome, blithesome, toothsome and then some damsel on the native singing-dancing stage. The Winter Garden show is exceedingly well staged, prettily costumed in the best Ellis manner, swiftly paced and makes for pleasant pastime. Where others have failed, the Shuberts have succeeded in infusing the Winter Garden as an institution with something that approaches, however remotely, to the air of the music halls that twinkle among the trees in the far-off Champs Elysées and that make the Rue Richer and the Boulevard des Capucines the annual Mecca of all good American Mohammedans.

Albeit our typical American theater audiences stand abashed, awed and humble before the profound wisdom and logic of any playwright who says nothing, provided only he says it with a sufficiently explosive air of defiance—example: Stanley Houghton; albeit our average audiences stand confused, strangely affected and meek before the proscenium exploitation of the hugger-muggerest platitudinisms, provided only the dramatist embellishes them with sufficiently suave lighting effects—example: Charles Rann Kennedy; albeit our audiences may regularly be relied upon to enjoy mental thrills from the contemplation of all drama provided only it is neither fresh nor thoughtful—example: "The Case of Becky"; it still would seem to require a sovereign courage on the part of any playwright to set forth a piece called "THE MASTER MIND."

Even Shaw, the one dramatist in England who might with moderate legitimacy aspire to the editing of a theatrical composition so named, would probably shrink abruptly from the job. Even Wedekind, the one and only dramatist in Germany (no, I have not forgotten Hauptmann, Sudermann, Ruederer or Thoma, whom Arnold Bennett shows signs of having read closely; probably, however, in translation) who might with moderate authenticity glance toward

such a job, would undoubtedly halt his footsteps shrewdly on the hither side. In short, as neither the southwestern countries of Europe—France, Italy, Spain—nor the northern countries reveal a man alive today halfway capable or halfway willing to approach the task (Strindberg, alas, is dead), and as Russia is throwing no single startling electric mind against the great back-drop of the world's theater, it has remained for an American, a young American, a young American who never till now has composed a drama or anything else, to cast himself heroically into the big open space. Hail, Daniel Carter!

Daniel's play, "THE MASTER MIND," contains no John Tanner, no Karl Hetmann, no mere crazy play-character intellect of so abysmally jejune a species. Daniel's play contains an Andrew. Andrew is a Master Mind. We know he is a Master Mind because the other characters periodically tell us he is. Of course, if they didn't, we should never suspect Andrew of being any more mental than, well—George Broadhurst; *but they do!* And this, according to the Henry W. Savage rules for dramatic criticism, ought to satisfy the critic. The play in which Andrew is supposed to do his thinking is a so-called crook play. Being a crook play, the District Attorney is properly flabbergasted in the last act. Hail, Daniel Carter! Hail—and farewell!

Thompson Buchanan and I are close friends. Thompson Buchanan's latest effort, "THE BRIDAL PATH," is an exceptionally inept and pointless play. Thus may the reader observe what he, probably being something of a numskull, will believe is the difficulty encountered by a critic when it becomes his duty to write about an unworthy piece of work from the hand of one of his warm personal comrades. The truth never is and never should be embarrassing either for a dramatic commentator who is worth his salt or for a playwright friend or any other kind of friend who is worth his. Buchanan is worth his salt. He has talent; and his brunette cook, Lottie, serves ravishing dinners. *But this last play of his!*

A WORD TO AUTHORS

By the Editor

IT seems incredible, in a country where the authors are forever complaining of not receiving intelligent appreciation from editors, that it should be difficult for a magazine to get hold of first class matter, when the one standard of that magazine's acceptance is merit.

But that is just the case with THE SMART SET. We find it difficult to get hold of stories, or poems or essays—and especially one-act plays—that we consider sufficiently meritorious to publish. The best material in this issue of the magazine did not come in voluntarily; and for the past month not a dozen stories of high order have been submitted to this office, despite the fact that we have received contributions from practically all the best known authors.

It is no doubt true that timid editors have discouraged authors from sending out their best and less conventional literary wares—but no author should be discouraged until his manuscript has visited every magazine. And we might add—what is more to the point—until it has visited the SMART SET office.

In this issue of THE SMART SET there are four stories which have been turned down by practically every magazine of any importance in America. We are not ashamed to accept stories with a past. In fact, we are rather proud when we discover a fine piece of work which has failed to meet with an amiable reception elsewhere. Why is this the case? Because we hold, as a colorable theory, that the public will read and pay for the best.

A great number of manuscripts submitted to magazines are rejected because of the timid and puritanical policies of those magazines. The editor

of this magazine is after the best stories which are being written today, and is willing to publish them, no matter what their themes.

Positively, merit and sincerity are the only requisites which are demanded of authors.

"This story will never sell," said a well known editor recently to an author, on handing him back his manuscript; "the theme of the story would offend too many readers."

The story was brought into this office, and was bought at once. THE SMART SET is not afraid of offending an intelligent reader with a first rate piece of work. We have foregone pandering to the pieties and bourgeois beliefs of the primitive-minded reader. We have come to the conclusion that America has sufficient intelligent readers to appreciate literary merit for what it is worth, and who enjoy reading stories, poems and articles which do not happen to soothe their own particular brand of religion or ethic.

This word to authors, therefore, is an appeal to those writers who are sensible of their capabilities, and who are in possession of manuscripts which are really worth while, but which have met with an unfavorable reception because of their unconventionality. We want stories of this nature. We know that they exist in America, and that the majority of authors would rather write stories which are a sincere expression of themselves than write down to the popular level at the behest of editors. Already, we have got hold of many such stories, but we want more of them.

And it's not a matter of big names. The query is often made: "Has an un-

known writer any chance to break into the magazine field?" It is unfortunate that there should ever be occasion for such a question. But it is not to be wondered at, for the query must rise naturally in a reader's mind when he looks through the great monthly output of periodicals and sees how the editors cling conservatively to the old writers whose works represent a rigid conventionalism of theme and treatment. But THE SMART SET wants new writers as well as old. It was the first to offer encouragement to many unknown authors in the past, and intends to do even more in the way of bringing new writers to notice—provided what they have to offer is worth while. Only recently we rejected material bearing the names of five of the best known men writing in English today—and accepted twice that number of manuscripts from men and women of whom we had never before heard. What the former wrote was weak, sentimental trade goods, insincerely conceived and executed according to the rubber-stamp literary formulas that should have been discarded with bustles and pantalettes. The work of the newcomers was fresh and vigorous and marked with a fidelity to life.

We want every efficient author in America to know that if he has a story which he feels he must write, no matter what the theme may be, it will find an outlet, provided that story is a sincere and commendable piece of work; and manuscripts will be read and passed upon promptly, payment being made weekly for all accepted material.

We want to make of THE SMART SET not only the best magazine in America, but something entirely new—the sort of magazine that Europe has been able to support, but which so far has not yet been attempted in America. The old maids of both sexes have always influenced more or less American literary art, with the result that we have not

kept pace with the literature overseas. Our best writers have been discouraged and their work has been stultified.

Here then is an opportunity for American writers to show what is in them—to write the thing which they have wanted to write, but which they have laid aside because of its unmarketability with the conventional magazines.

A word in explanation, lest this statement should be misunderstood: THE SMART SET is not after sensational or risqué stories. It is after genuine stories, stories which reflect life truthfully; and if these stories are genuine, their subject matter will not militate against them.

Many American writers have had to go to Europe for recognition because of the shy policy of American editors in rejecting a certain class of story. These editors may have been led by a sincerity of purpose, no doubt, but we believe the intelligence of the American reading public has been greatly underestimated by them.

To be sure, this is a great advance in American editorial policies. But the times have changed. Public appreciation has become finer. Interest in life has become keener. Today there are thousands of people in this country who demand a magazine of the highest order, who do not cling to the idea of happy endings, who do not demand that a story deal exclusively with "nice" people, and who do not look for the pointing of a moral in their fiction.

To these people I want to make my appeal. I cannot believe that the reading public of America is wholly satisfied with the offerings of the average magazine.

Beginning with this issue, THE SMART SET is going to be better than it ever has been.

In America something has remained undone in the magazine publishing business. THE SMART SET proposes to do it.

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